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LITTLE BIG PLANET 2

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Slide away and give it all you've got

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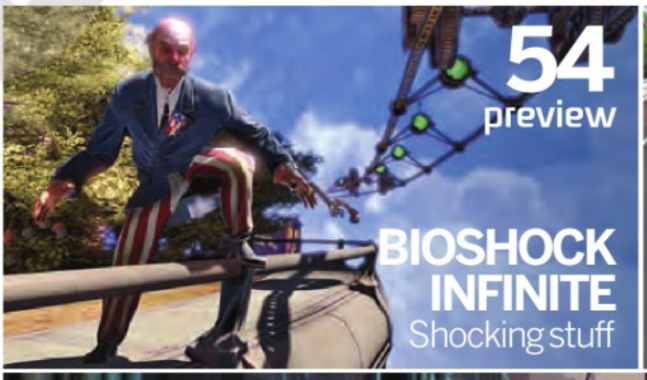
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Welcome PLAY

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

Odyssey to the best



At last games are back. We've had a bit of a lull over the last few months but all that is about to change as our review section this issue is crammed full of the games that will keep you glued to your controller well into the new year. As a result we've done some funny and rather unusual things this month – we've scored an overhead kick in *FIFA*, we've dressed up in a romper suit and sliced the arms off zombies in *Dead Rising 2*, played to a capacity crowd in *Guitar Hero 5* and took pole position in Monza while playing *F1 2010*. Not a bad month's work if we do say so ourselves.

But the games taking up most of our time were new to the party. Both *Vanquish* and *Enslaved: Odyssey To The West* are new properties from fairly green development teams but both are doing their part to push their respective genres forward. After the surprise success of *Bayonetta*, Sega's PlatinumGames returns with a shooter that is in contention for game of the year. *Vanquish* is a fast, frenetic and, above all else, fun shooter that manages to meld a wealth of established ideas together into something that feels fresh. I think it will certainly surprise a lot of people and is a perfect mix of both Eastern and Western gaming styles.

Speaking of which, *Enslaved*, another union of cultures, has also impressed this month. Ninja Theory has clearly learned lessons from PS3-exclusive *Heavenly Sword* and returned with something much more engaging, a twist on an ancient tale and one that is extremely well realised through exquisite digital acting and a beautiful game world. This should prove to gamers that Monkey really is magic.

> This will surprise a lot of people and is a perfect mix of East and West

Moving into the last few months of the year, the deluge of game releases is unlikely to let up so be sure to clear some time in your schedule as you're certainly going to need it.

K.Hennessey Editor

contributors



Darran Jones
Darran has set up a new cookery show on YouTube. He invites viewers to send in pirate Game Boy cartridges and then destroys them in his kitchen. He smashed one with a meat tenderiser, melted another in the microwave and put another in a toasted sandwich. He won't eat any of his creations, though, because they're pirated so they'll taste bad.



Simon Miller
Miller has recently been away on tour for the first time with his band. There were fans, parties, groupies, fights, rocks and rolls, but Miller stayed well clear of the lot because he's very disciplined. He did allow himself to go wild on the last night of the tour, though, downing not one, but two protein shakes right before going on stage.



Dan Peel
Dan is now a married man and asked us to make it sound good in case 'she' reads it. So, yeah, apparently married life is brilliant. Dan's all smiles these days and goes around saying, "Life is good" and winking at everyone. He also says, "Słodkiego zycia" because, in case we haven't mentioned it loads of times before, his wife is Polish.

the PLAY promise

Play solemnly swears (raises right hand) to bring you the best PlayStation magazine that is humanly possible.

We will always bring you the most in-depth, impartial, honest reviews and will never bow down to PR or advertising pressure. We have some of the most experienced reviewers in the industry and we're not afraid to use them. And we take our own screenshots so you can see what the game looks like *when you play it*. We will be the first to break the biggest stories, the first to cover the biggest games and in the most detailed way. We will only ever bang on about the very best PlayStation games, the ones that we would pay our own cash for. We aren't afraid of expressing an opinion, especially when it's for your benefit. So don't expect our previews to simply regurgitate a load of internet or press release tosh – we'll be telling you whether a game is looking good or not, regardless of the stage of the code.

We want to fuel your passion for gaming like no other magazine and we want you to trust everything you read here. If you don't then you can simply stop buying it. That's how confident we are that you'll love **Play**. Promise.

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NEWS

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

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"The market was dead. It's beyond dead, it's zombified now, the Japanese market" – Keiji Inafune, Capcom global head of production, p12

PSone was released in the UK on 29 September 1995 for £299

15 YEARS OF PLAYSTATION

For more on the history of PlayStation turn to page 30

We asked developers around the world what they thought the PlayStation has brought to gaming in the last 15 years



NATHANIEL CHAPMAN, *lead designer, Obsidian Entertainment* "Probably the best thing PlayStation did for the games industry is make third-party development a real force. Nintendo was known in the Eighties and Nineties for not being very friendly to third-party developers and Sony completely changed that. Some of the PlayStation's bestselling games were *Madden* and all those EA games. PSone was the first system where I felt it wasn't just first-party games that I wanted to buy. PlayStation was also the first game system that I heard referenced in a rap. I heard someone actually rap PlayStation. You didn't hear anyone rap about the N64."



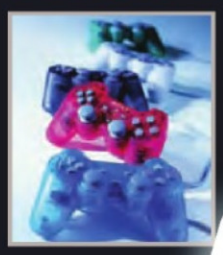
JON MURPHY, *PES team lead, Konami* "I wasn't working in the industry when PlayStation first launched, but all of a sudden it went from a choice among people like me who were fanatics to being a choice among people I associated with as friends and who I could now connect with as friends. We used to hang around playing *Resident Evil* together, taking turns through the night. That widening of the market has changed the way people see videogames immensely in a way that you don't need to feel embarrassed about."



DAVE COX, *producer, Konami* "I think Sony has expanded people's perceptions of what videogames were and that's not to belittle everything that happened before with Nintendo and Sega, but I think when PlayStation came along it was such a big change for everybody. I remember I was working in a game shop at the time and we got the PlayStations from Japan, the imported ones. We put *Ridge Racer* on and we sat there looking at *Ridge Racer* saying, 'that is awesome'. I think for me Sony has created an entertainment business and not just a games business. If Sony hadn't come into the business this industry wouldn't be what it is today."

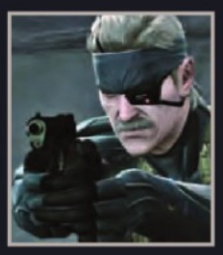
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Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



PlayStation buttons explained

After 15 years the creator of the PlayStation pad has revealed his thinking behind the shapes on the face buttons. According to Teiyu Goto △ refers to viewpoint or head, □ is a piece of paper or menu, and ○ and ✕ stand for yes and no respectively.



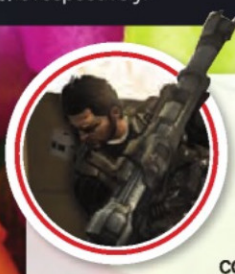
No Trophies for MGS 4 any time soon

Speaking via Twitter to questions about releasing a 'complete' version of *Metal Gear Solid 4*, Hideo Kojima revealed he would love to, but doesn't have the time. *MGS 4* lacks Trophy support and Kojima said he'd like to add Trophies and 3D, but would need someone else to do it.



LA Noire pushed into 2011

Take-Two has officially announced that Team Bondi's *LA Noire* has slipped into 2011 for some extra development time. While the game had been expected to be released before the end of 2010, the virtual information blackout seemed to indicate it would take a little while longer.



DAVID ANFOSSI, *producer, Eidos Montreal* "What I like with the PlayStation is that it's really hard to reach the limits of the platform. You can push things further every game. The conception of the PlayStation allows us to always push a little more by correctly using the platform. To be honest and direct with you I would say that it's a little bit more difficult. That's the bad thing about it because you can push the limits, but you have to take more time to think about how you can use that setup."



BRUCE OBERG, *co-founder, Sucker Punch Entertainment* "I remember when I got my first PlayStation and being able to play games like *Ridge Racer*, the fact that you were able to put so much more content on the CD and give more content to gamers at the time, Sony has always been pushing that technological envelope. As a computer guy the technology inside the PlayStation 3 is super cool and the PlayStation 2 was cool in the same way. I think it's done a great job of pushing great technology and really great titles and content."



KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI, *Gran Turismo creator, Polyphony Digital* "Well, if PlayStation didn't exist then *Gran Turismo* wouldn't exist. That's obviously a very personal point, but from a general perspective I think that one of the most important things is that it went from a toy to a type of media that could be enjoyed by everyone. Videogames went from being toys to a form of popular entertainment. I think it touches on the world of art so to speak and I think that was something that was unique to the PlayStation. I think it expanded the horizon of the things we call videogames."



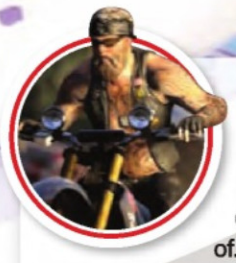
JENOVA CHEN, *co-founder, thatgamecompany* "From [Sony's] support for artistic game studios such as Team Ico and Quantic Dreams, to its dedication with highly polished blockbusters such as *God Of War* and *Uncharted*, it is always looking for excellence in entertainment. Even on the smaller scale, you can find its unique taste through the PSN library. Without Sony's trust and support over the past four years there wouldn't be *flOw*, *Flower* or *Journey*."



ALEX EVANS, *co-founder, Media Molecule* "I do think that it's just an iconic brand and people understand consoles in terms of PlayStation. People just say, 'It's a PlayStation', even though they don't really know what's under the telly. It became mainstream.

"I like the fact that we're leftfield of what the PS3 is because it means the PS3 can be a bit broader than everyone else. I use mine as a Blu-ray player as much as I do as a games console.

"With games like *Vib-Ribbon*, Sony's always been out there, doing quite mental things in a way that no other console has done."



MATT SOUTHERN, *game director, Evolution Studios* "PlayStation changed things for the best and forever. I can remember 15 years ago I had pretty much stopped playing games. I played the occasional Amiga game and maybe the SNES, but I was getting increasingly interested in girls and drink. Then PlayStation came along and the pods were in the nightclubs and it felt like I could actually carry on gaming. It's not geeky and even if it is a little bit, that's fine; it's not something to be ashamed of. I can have a girlfriend and a PlayStation. I think that's the most significant thing Sony did. The launch of PlayStation was one of the most defining moments in terms of making videogames a mainstream activity. Everyone will game and PlayStation was one of the most important catalysts in making sure that happened."



Hail To The King

Gearbox Software to bring Duke Nukem back

IT'S BEEN ANNOUNCED that Gearbox Software has picked up the rights to classic FPS *Duke Nukem*. If you're not familiar with Duke, here's what you can expect.

> BIG GUNS



We're talking literally and metaphorically as Duke has a fine set of guns long before he picks up a gun. Anyway, large firearms are the bread and butter of what *Duke Nukem* is all about.

> GORE



Duke Nukem games have always been an adult-only affair and that means plenty of blood and lots of body parts flying all over the place. What did you expect with all those huge guns?

> ADVENTURE



In the past Duke has spoofed classic movies like *Aliens*, *Men In Black* and *The Terminator*. The plus side of that is he gets to go to some amazing locations in his battle against alien invaders.

> EXPLOSIVE ACTION

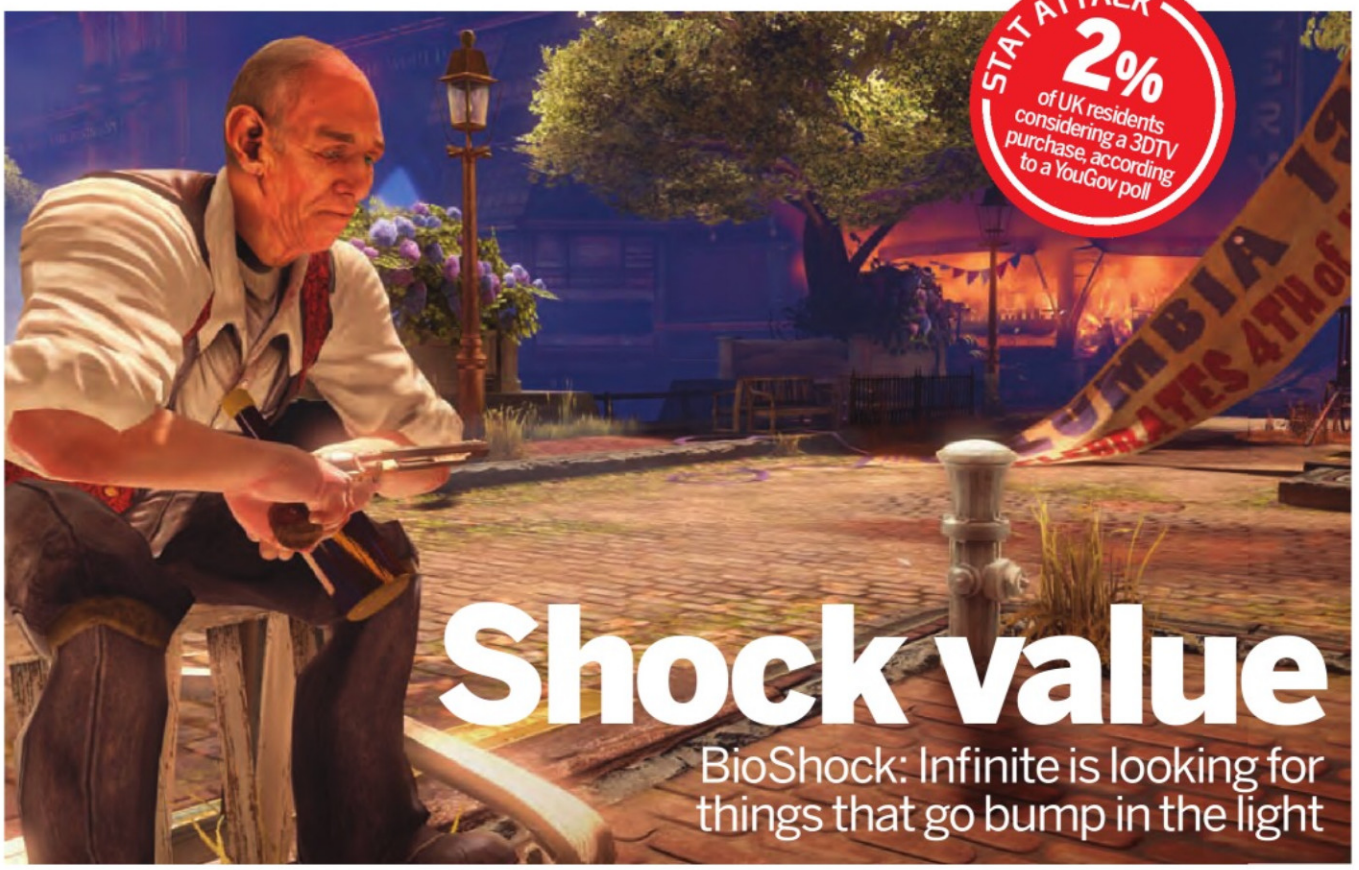


There are few games around that have loved their explosions more than this franchise and with the power of Gearbox behind it *Duke Nukem Forever* promises to be atomic.

> HOT WOMEN



Duke loves the ladies and as well as all the gore, this is why these games get adult ratings. From strip clubs to projections of topless women, *Duke Nukem* seems to like flashing the flesh.



STAT ATTACK

2%

of UK residents considering a 3DTV purchase, according to a YouGov poll

Shock value

BioShock: Infinite is looking for things that go bump in the light

Speaking exclusively with **Play**, Irrational Games' director of development Tim Gerritsen explained how the *BioShock* developer was looking to turn the conventions of horror on their head with *BioShock: Infinite*. While the original game took the traditional approach of shrouding everything in darkness, the latest game will be looking to find frights in the light. It hopes that its pre-World War I setting will help achieve this.

"Rapture was really about this oppressive feeling and being confined and compressed by the ocean around you and you really felt oppressed by this weight," Gerritsen said. "This time around you're above everything but there's this new sense of tension. This sense of vertigo like everything could fall away from underneath you. It's a very different type of tension. Darkness has been used a lot to create a theme of frightening situations and we want to explore how else we can play with your emotions."

Gerritsen believes that the early 20th Century setting could also help set the menacing tone for *Infinite*. "Everybody had this feeling of hope that the whole world was going to be wonderful and that technology was going to solve every ill," he told us. "Then there was this creepy, underlying endemic racism that was rampant at the time and these are things we want to explore as well. It's about taking that crazy period of optimism and light and combining it with the crazy darkness that was underlying all of it and coming up with a *BioShock* game."

word on the tweet



TimOfLegend

"*Red Dead* tweets are worrying my mom: 'Tim, are you really in Mexico? Tell me that you aren't really in Mexico. Love, Mom.'"

***Red Dead* was having an odd effect on Tim Schafer of Double Fine's family life**

Starkiller speaks

Force Unleashed II actor tells Play all about growing up with videogames

Speaking to **Play**, *Force Unleashed II* actor Sam Witwer talked about growing up with games and his thoughts of how games are becoming more sophisticated. Witwer, who has appeared in TV shows like *Battlestar Galactica* and *Smallville* as well as bringing Starkiller to life, proved his gaming knowledge to us by talking about the importance of good storytelling in games and how things have changed since his younger game-playing days.

"When I was six, videogames were for six year olds," Witwer said. "When I was 16, videogames evolved along with my generation, when I was 20 they had evolved again and so on. It's an art form that's growing up with the people that invented it and so now that we're all grown up and have more sophisticated tastes and we are demanding we have videogames that reflect it."

Witwer doesn't believe that games will replace films, though, as he believes the two mediums offer different, but equally enjoyable experiences. "I don't think [games] will ever replace movies," he insisted. "I think there will always be a place for an absolutely directed experience that tells a direct story and has a very specific view point. However, videogames aren't going anywhere either, because there is also that need to literally walk around in the skin of another character and experience a story that way."



REASONS WHY...

You need to keep an eye on Journey



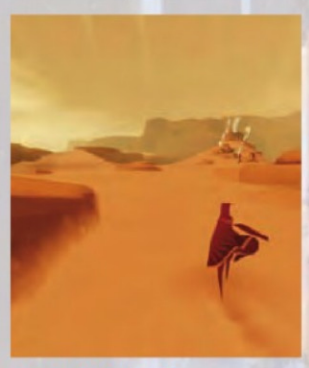
HELLO THERE *Journey* has multiplayer, although it's not the kind of multiplayer you'll be used to. You can't talk or interact with one another, but if you want to explore together you can.



INSPIRED BY SPACE *Journey* aims to create specific feelings in players. In this instance it's a sense of awe and loneliness inspired by conversations the dev had with an astronaut who travelled to the moon.



CAN YOU TELL WHAT IT IS YET? *Journey*'s story is a mystery. Like *Shadow Of The Colossus* you're supposed to piece it together. There are no conversations with NPCs even though you can meet characters.



FLOWER POWER If you've had the chance to play *Flower*, you will know that thatgamecompany is one of the most ingenious developers out there today. If it makes something, we take notice.



A SEA OF SAND The still images of *Journey* don't do it justice. In motion you see that the deserts that make up the scenery often move like an ocean. The grains on the surface also move independently creating a sensation of constant movement and life.

A targeted finish

PES 2011 team has picked its battles against FIFA 11

PES 2011's European team lead Jon Murphy told **Play** recently that the dev team has been selective about what areas it improved this year in the hopes of being more competitive against *FIFA 11*. Passing appears to have been the subject of this new focus, but Murphy said it was not an easy concept to push on the team.

"We've got to stick a pin in one area and really go to make drastic changes," he said. "It's been difficult for the team because it's taken a certain amount of a leap of faith that they should be acting like that. Their feeling is that the bigger the changes they make the bigger the risk of breaking the game. We have to do that and this year we have to provide a viable alternative to *FIFA* and I think we are."

Murphy also spoke about how *Pro Evo* had let the footballing crown slip from its head and how it's struggled against *FIFA*'s dominance recently. "It may be that we had become pompous about the fact that we had the best gameplay and no one was going to touch us," he told us. "We've had our arses burnt. In *PES 2010* we started to decide on the big issues that we'd change and you started to get a feeling of how the team were now going to treat the product, but I think *PES 2011* is the first time you've seen us say 'that has got to be immediately and utterly changed."





QUESTION?

What's Resistance 3 all about?

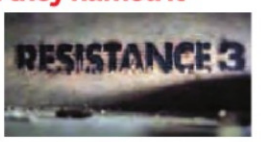
THE LATEST OF Sony's badly kept secrets, *Resistance 3* was announced at gamescom with a cryptic live-action trailer. So, what can we expect from the latest Insomniac Games shooter?

It's hit the fan



Things are not good. With Nathan Hale presumed dead from the end of *Resistance 2*, the war in America against the Chimera doesn't appear to have gone all that well. There was a real 'survivors' feel to this trailer and its characters.

So good they named it twice



New York seems like the likely setting for *Resistance 3*. The Statue of Liberty features in the logo and there is also a billboard featured in the teaser trailer advertising New York.

All for one



If there's one thing that the trailer hints over everything else, it's the possibility of full campaign co-op, possibly with you playing as survivors rather than military figures as in the first two games. That would be a major shift for this series.

Rise of the Grims



Grims, one of the lower forms of Chimera who first appeared in *Resistance 2*, make up the majority of the Chimeran presence in the teaser trailer and give it something of a *Left 4 Dead* feel. That could be a clue.

Lets go to space



Some have taken this ad as a warning to 'Get Away', but we think it's some kind of promotion for space travel. Could civilians be evacuating the planet to get away from the Chimera? Seems extreme, but it could be.

ANSWER:

The resistance seems to be going local

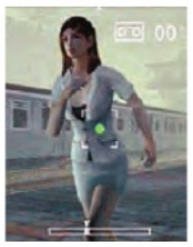
Flashback

A brief history of Suda51

GOICHI SUDA HAS risen to be one of the most highly respected and followed Japanese developers around thanks to a commitment to innovative and often peculiar stories and gameplay ideas.



> SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING SPECIAL
Suda's second game, but it caught people's attention thanks to its downbeat story and shocking conclusion. You had to play through as a new pro wrestler working his way up the ranks against the best in the world.



> MICHIGAN: REPORT FROM HELL
Suda51 worked on the original concept for this game as well as being producer on it. Michigan was an interesting twist on the survival-horror genre as you controlled a cameraman capturing the events of a monster attack.



> KILLER7
The game that put Suda51 on most people's radars, *Killer7* mixed unusual gameplay mechanics with a complex story and art style to create an iconic yet infuriating title. It still splits gamers down the middle as to whether it was actually good or not.



> NO MORE HEROES
This Wii title will be coming to the PS3 in Europe next year with full Move compatibility and follows the rise of Travis Touchdown as he attempts to climb the ranks of the world's greatest assassins.

> SINE MORA
Goichi Suda's first digital game and first collaboration with a Western developer that we know of. He also has projects in the works with EA and Hideo Kojima, which we hope to hear more about in the not too distant future.

Game idol

No More Heroes creator tells us to expect more digital games and collaborations from Grasshopper

Speaking with **Play** recently about his collaboration with Hungarian dev Theodore Reiker of Digital Reality, Goichi Suda (aka Suda51) revealed that he's keen to find other small developers to support and to make more digital games. To date Digital Reality's games have been seen largely on PC, but it is expanding onto mobile devices and is now working on its first digital console title, *Sine Mora*. The side-scrolling 'Diesel Punk' shooter is also Suda51's first digital download release.

"By creating a downloadable game it actually gives younger creators a chance to create games as well," Suda said. "I think it creates good opportunities for other creators like Akira Yamaoka who is the director for *Silent Hill* or Kazutoshi Iida who is another famous creator [both joined Grasshopper this year – Ed] who will have the chance to create games as well. I'm very excited about this."

But Suda is not just looking for homegrown talent, as his collaboration with a Hungarian developer proves. "Even in Japan there are a lot of independent creators or artists. I may not be able to support everyone, but I at least want to be able to create a place where people can gather around and really create something together," he added. "Nowadays everyone can create games and everyone has the environment and setting to create videogames. Like in this instance it's Hungary and I'm sure there are places where people can create games in the Czech Republic or Romania. So to collaborate with these people I think Grasshopper is really suitable for that."

> The side-scrolling 'Diesel Punk' shooter is Suda51's first digital download release

In other Suda51 news it was revealed at gamescom that *No More Heroes* would be coming to the PS3 with Move compatibility thanks to Konami and Marvelous Entertainment.



word on the tweet



DuvalMagic
"Duke Nukem is now the #1 twitter trending topic in the world!"
Gearbox Software boss Randy Pitchford soaks up the *DNF* fever on Twitter.

PLAY TEAM TROPHIES

Things the Play team has achieved this month



PLATINUM: KEITH
Invited the team over for a barbecue before the summer finally called it quits and disappeared for another year. Thanks for the sausages.



GOLD: IAN
Successfully completed a mass of reviews this issue despite sometimes being of dubious quality. The games that is, not Ian's reviews.



SILVER: GAV
Earned a doctorate this month... in *Peggle*. That means he got 100 per cent on every level of *Peggle Deluxe*. That's very impressive indeed.



BRONZE: DAN
Supplied the **Play** team with some amazing Polish cake, although in fairness his missus made it so he can't take all the credit.

The walking dead

Japanese game development has "zombified", says Keiji Inafune



Speaking to **Play**, *Dead Rising* creator Keiji Inafune has described Japan's development community as "zombified." This was in response to us asking if he stood by his comments at last year's Tokyo Game Show where he said that Japanese development was "finished." It seems he thinks things are now worse, not better.

"I still stand by my comments," he said. "The market was dead. It's beyond dead, it's zombified now, the Japanese market. Lots of people are still living in the dream of the Eighties and Nineties, the golden time for Japanese videogames. Unless the Japanese admit the market is dead, Western developers will take over."

He also insisted that it wasn't just a question of money as some suggest. "A lot of people talk about *Red Dead* and say, 'If we had that sort of money to throw at development, of course you can create a wonderful game,' he explained. "But that is just an excuse, because... videogames are all about ideas and the concept – it's nothing to do with the money."

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose



FIVE NEW PHYSICS
The introduction of new physics-based tools and objects such as Repulsion Gel, Aerial Faith Plates, Propulsion Gel, Excursion Funnels and Pneumatic Diversity Vents. Each will now need to be taken into account.



OH, THE HUMANITY
Valve planned for the co-op to feature human test subjects and even wrote dialogue for GLaDOS mocking them. Apparently that's being rewritten.



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER
Portal 2 will feature a full co-op campaign with special test chambers intended to test your combined puzzle-solving might. You will play as two robots seemingly built from spare parts of a gun turret and a personality core.

PAINT POWER
The new gels were taken from *Tag: The Power Of Paint*. The students who created it were hired by Valve like the team that made *Portal* were after making *Narbacular Drop* in 2005.



PORTAL 2

Publisher Valve Corporation
Developer Valve Corporation • **ETA** February 2011



PORTAL KOMBAT
Valve considered a competitive multiplayer for *Portal 2*, but found after testing some concepts that it didn't sustain the fun that having puzzles did.

TOUR GUIDE
Wheatley is your host around the world of the Aperture Science labs as you explore places you haven't seen before.



HIDDEN MOTIVES
In the new *Portal 2* demo shown at gamescom, Wheatley bemoans having to work with "smelly humans."



OFFICE WORKER
Ricky Gervais's writing partner Stephen Merchant was revealed to be the voice of 'buddy sphere' Wheatley at gamescom. This sphere appears to accompany Chell for much of the new game, acting as a guide.



WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

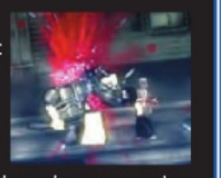
What's the PSN missing? These few things at least

1 Further Plus Expansion: With the talk from Microsoft being that it's going to increase the cost of its Xbox Live Gold subscriptions and even rumours of a Platinum service, the time is ripe for even more content to be delivered through PlayStation Plus to hammer home its value for money.

2 15th Birthday Hits: We're hoping to see some extra cheap PSone classics on PSN to coincide with the 15th birthday of the console in Europe. The games are already pretty cheap for the most part, but we all love a little bit of a discount and this would be the time to do it.



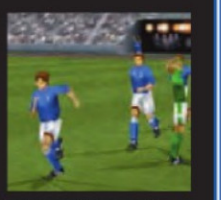
3 Embrace Homebrew: PS Jailbreak and its pirating controversy brought up the issue of allowing homebrew games to be played on PS3. Maybe Sony should be thinking about an 'Indie Games' channel for home-made gaming.



4 *Killzone 3* Beta: We're fairly confident there's going to be one pretty soon, but we'd really like it sooner rather than later. We know there's a lot of pre-Christmas competition coming, but come on Sony. Show us some Helghast.



5 Classic *Pro Evo*: We recently decided to play some of the PS2 versions of *Pro Evolution Soccer* and remembered how cool this series once was. How about some of those early games being released on PSN?



WWWTS news:

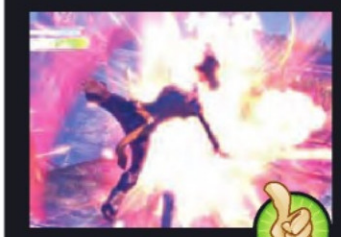
Yet another movie download service is coming to Europe this autumn as Sony's own Qriocity launches. It's a massive on-demand channel supported by most of the major movie studios.



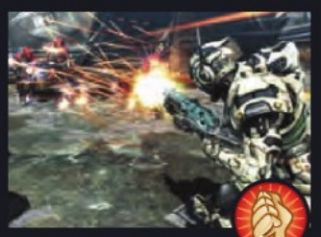
DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month

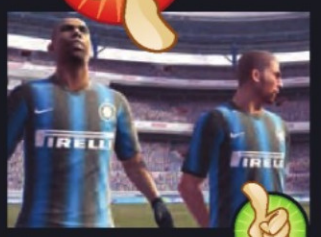
Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 70



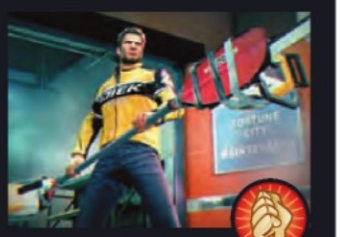
DO: Spend some time looking for Tech Orbs in *Enslaved* so you can get all the cool combat upgrades that make the game so cool.



DON'T: Start sliding around on your knees wherever you go after playing *Vanquish*. You'll ruin your trousers and that's no good.



DO: Spend some time mastering the passing on *PES 2011* as it's very different and will take some time to get to grips with.

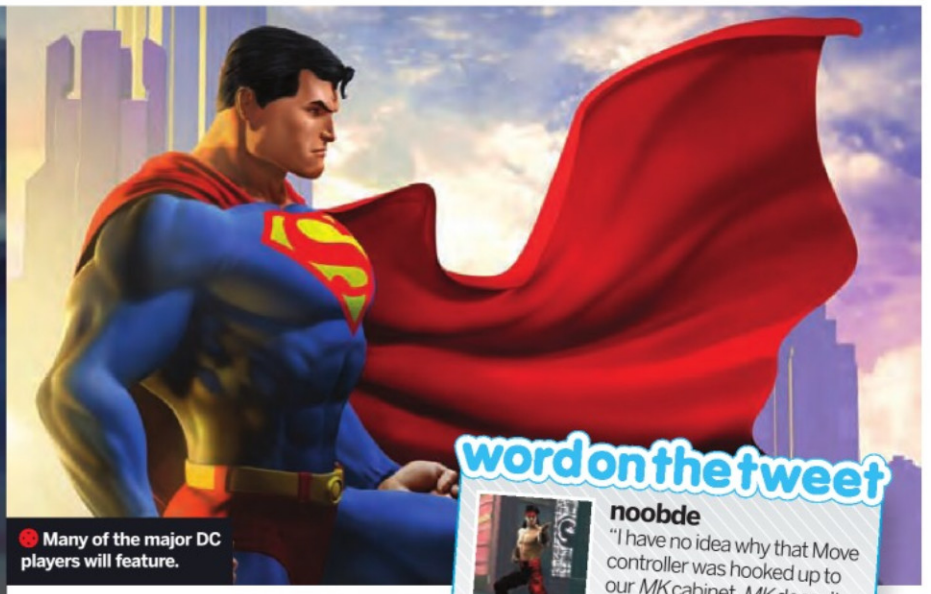


DON'T: Worry too much about saving survivors on your first *Dead Rising 2* playthrough. Just have some fun smashing up zombies.



DC Universe Online

Q&A Senior producer Wes Yanagi tells us about breaking the console market with an MMO and the benefits of the DC licence



Many of the major DC players will feature.

There seems to be a strong lineup of MMOs coming to PS3 in the next year or so. Do you feel that this surge in the genre will help *DC Universe*?
I think it definitely helps. A strong lineup of PS3 MMO titles helps everyone including ourselves. It's an exciting time for MMOs on the console, especially with the increased public interest in the genre. With *DCUO*, we're particularly excited to push the genre in a fresh new direction with fast-paced, action-packed combat set in the exciting world of the DC universe.

The DC brand alone must give this game a really good head start on most other MMO titles. Do you think that could be a key factor in helping to break the console market?
With the DC brand, you have well-known characters like Superman and Batman as well as 75 years of stories and content, but until now you've only been able to see this universe through a window via comics, television or movies. With an MMO, we're creating a virtual doorway for you to step into this world and explore famous locations like the JLA Watchtower, Hall of Doom, Arkham Asylum, the Daily Planet, and the Batcave. The fantasy of exploring the DC universe and interacting with famous superheroes and villains is something fans are eager to experience, especially to mainstream console players who would love to wield the powers of these iconic legends.

Given that by their nature MMOs take up a lot of a person's time, have you sensed a resistance towards such games coming to consoles over the years?
Perhaps in the past, but I do think MMOs as well as other genres are trending away from this. Every year games expand out to a broader market and I think developers are adapting to the changing demographics. *DCUO* is no different. One of our play modes, PvP, especially caters to this with shorter, high-intensity play sessions. Even in our open-world content, we strive to deliver meaningful segments of content without demanding hours of commitment. In addition to this, we've put a lot of time iterating on the controls and user interface to make them intuitive and easy to learn.

Allowing players to create their own heroes could bring up some tricky licensing problems for you. Do you have plans in place to deal with such things?
Obviously we'll have systems in place to address characters like '$uperman', and you won't be able to look exactly like Batman with his cape and cowl. However, we do have high-end battle gear you can earn from the major characters. Imagine that you've helped Batman so much that he's given you equipment to represent his cause, which even bears his symbol.

> You'll be fighting alongside or against the major DC characters

How will players be interacting with the heroes they know from the DC canon such as Batman or Superman?
In just about all the mission lines in the game, you'll be fighting alongside or against the major DC characters. Not only do we have missions involving the major characters you would expect like Superman, Batman, Lex Luthor and the Joker, but we'll also have missions where you will encounter characters like the Teen Titans, Gorilla Grodd, Doctor Fate, Zatanna, Doomsday and the ever-popular Aquaman.

DC characters very rarely get killed off in the books. Is that something you're taking account of in your handling of encounters with the licensed heroes and villains?
For launch, we want to create a solid baseline of the world. It needs to be an idealised version of the DC universe that our mainstream audience can understand – Bruce Wayne is Batman, Clark Kent is Superman etc. Post-launch, we'll expand on this and hopefully find opportunities with DC Comics to bring current storylines into the game, which could involve the deaths of characters.



You can create your own superheroes, but they can't look *too* similar to the licensed superheroes.

word on the tweet

noobde
"I have no idea why that Move controller was hooked up to our *MK* cabinet. *MK* doesn't run with the PS Move. :("

***Mortal Kombat* creator Ed Boon seems unhappy about its lack of Move functionality.**

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Some Move co-op levels will be on the *LBP 2* disc for you to try out.



Adding Move to Create could give you more control over Sackbot animations.

LBP 2 Move plans confirmed

Media Molecule reveals Move compatibility DLC plans

STAT ATTACK
10
number of free GBs you'll need on your PS3 to install *GT5*

After hinting last issue that Move functions in *LittleBigPlanet 2* would be released as DLC after the game, Media Molecule has confirmed its plans to **Play**, giving us more detail on what you can expect. Speaking exclusively to **Play**, Media Molecule co-founder Alex Evans revealed that *LBP 2* would feature a 'Move Demo' on the disc to give you a taster of what was to come with full Move gameplay and creative tools coming some time after release.

"Where we're going with Move is that on the disc there's actually an *LBP* demo of Move functionality," Evans told us. "We've shown some levels at TGS and we've built that up into ten awesome, really nice Move levels. We haven't built Create tools yet for Move and the idea is that the Direct Control Seat, which is Sixaxis based will have an exact equivalent for the Move. That basically means that every bit of the Move, ranging from its position and orientation to buttons, can be plumbed through to anything that you like. At that point we can legitimately say *LittleBigPlanet* is awesome for Move."

Until that is achieved Media Molecule will not be releasing Move functionality, but it's not just about letting people make their own Move levels. It's also about giving good gameplay to those fans who don't create. "Once we start using and building with the direct control version of the Move it has to be really high-quality levels that come out of the box, so that even if you never make a Move level in your life you can buy the game and still get something out of it," Evans concluded.

Whipping stories into shape

Castlevania producer talks about making the story king in Lords Of Shadow

The story and characters are the main concern and focus of *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow*, its producer Dave Cox told us exclusively. While it is hoping to remain true to many aspects of the older, 2D games, MercurySteam has looked to tell a more gritty tale in the hopes of establishing a new, 3D version of the series.

"We wanted to introduce the Belmonts and set up the premise of *Castlevania* to a new generation of fans," said Cox. "We've used Robert Carlyle, Patrick Stewart, Natascha McElhone and Jason Isaacs, because we wanted to tell this story in a realistic way, not a bombastic, Hollywood style. We're a European studio and wanted to give the game a European tone."

As it stands he considers *Lords Of Shadow* to be a re-imagining of the *Castlevania* universe, but not one that means the end of other versions. "It's like *Batman Begins*," said Cox. "Christopher Nolan's *Batman* is fantastic and it's different to Frank Miller's, but it's still *Batman*... We're just making a different vision of *Castlevania* and that doesn't supersede anything that's happened in the past."



PLAY Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS3 CHART



1 **Mafia II**
2K
Mafia II finally toppled the summer dominance of *Red Dead* to claim the number one spot. **81%**



2 NEW **Dead Rising 2**
Capcom
It's an open-world bonanza at the top of the charts as *Dead Rising 2* has opened strong. **78%**



3 **Red Dead Redemption**
Rockstar
Rockstar's Western epic has started to slip and with big games on the horizon it's likely to drop fast. **92%**



4 **Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2** Activision
There's no shifting *Call Of Duty*. It will only be replaced by the next one after all. **94%**



5 NEW **Formula 1 2010**
Codemasters
It's been a while since we last saw a major F1 game and this title is a must for hardcore F1 fans. **86%**



6 **Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days**
Square Enix
It hasn't managed to sustain its early performance, but *Kane & Lynch* is still going strong. **71%**



7 NEW **Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions** Activision
At the stronger end of the Spidey game spectrum, but still too many of the old flaws for us. **69%**



8 NEW **Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2**
Ubisoft
Ubisoft continues a strong line in flight sims, but this isn't enough of an upgrade on the last one. **69%**

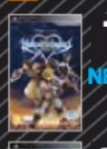


9 NEW **Sports Champions**
Sony
The only Move title to break into the top games so far, but expect plenty more in the coming months. **83%**



10 **Toy Story 3**
Disney
Still plenty of movie buzz around this game and a very reasonable movie spin-off it is, too. **82%**

PSP CHART



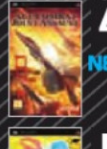
1 NEW **Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep** Square Enix
Straight in at number one, there is simply no underestimating the popularity of JRPGs on PSP. **88%**



2 NEW **Valkyria Chronicles II**
Sega
After the rousing introduction to this series we got on PS3 it's no surprise it's doing well on the PSP, too. **87%**



3 **Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker** Konami
It's beginning to drop down the charts a little, but *Peace Walker* remains an essential PSP purchase. **92%**



4 NEW **Ace Combat: Joint Assault**
Namco Bandai
Probably the premier flight combat series and an excellent conversion to the PSP with some cool co-op. **79%**



5 **LittleBigPlanet**
Sony
Plenty of new entries this month, so Sackboy has to make some room for them and drop to fifth for a bit. **90%**

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

ATLUS SEXES UP

Catherine is either a brilliant psychological thriller or softcore porn

opinion



We still don't know exactly what type of game *Catherine* is going to be.

OUR MAN IN JAPAN
PlayStation pondering from the East

Sex sells. It's a universal axiom of marketing. It's just as true in Japan as anywhere else, and Atlus knows it. Which is why when it unveiled *Catherine*, its new PS3 game, it didn't talk about gameplay. Instead, it took out a full-page fold-out ad that featured the titular Catherine with a very suggestive substance covering her face. The exact nature of said substance is left to the reader's imagination until he or she unfolds the rest of the advertisement to find that it's pizza cheese.

The preview that preceded that ad described a game that sounds as if it should be above such pandering. The protagonist of *Catherine* is Vincent, a herbivorous male – a Japanese term that describes a large group of young, effeminate men (approximately 66% of males 20-34, according to some estimates) in modern Japanese society who are uninterested in sex, money and success, but are very concerned with their looks. Vincent, a 32-year-old single man only now attaining independence from his parents, is a textbook example.

Vincent's proverbial vegetable-munching existence is turned upside down when he meets the 22-year-old Catherine, who inspires a series of nightmares in which he finds himself in the world of unending stairs. Screenshots from the game imply that Vincent's dream world is filled with bipedal sheep (a less than subtle nod to famed Japanese author Murakami Haruki's novel *Dance Dance Dance*, which also follows a man in his thirties coming of age and a dream world with an anthropomorphic sheep). The game's producer and director, Katsura Hashino, describes the project as adult-oriented and several other members of the team echoed his sentiments.

The problem is that the literary inspiration and aspirations of *Catherine* are overshadowed by the game's sexually charged marketing. Atlus followed up the *Famitsu* story with a trailer suffering from the same unfortunate disconnect. While the first half seemed to imply that the game would deal with the lives of Japan's young men and the reasons for the herbivorous phenomenon, the second half might as well have been a compilation of panty shots from cheap late-night anime set to hip-hop music. However, the mere promise of a story that comments in a serious matter about the issues facing Japanese youth today is enough to keep my interest alive, at least until I get to check the game out when it's released this winter.

One last thing, you may have noticed that I didn't mention what genre of game *Catherine* is. That's because Atlus hasn't said what it is yet. Despite being developed by the team responsible for *Persona 3* and *4*, it is adamant that it's not an RPG, at least in the traditional Japanese sense. I'm guessing that it's probably an action-adventure game of some kind, but there's no way to be sure until the team tells the press or releases some gameplay footage.

Small-screen Yakuza

Japanese television network TBS is joining forces with Sega to create a new series based on the *Yakuza* videogame franchise, specifically on the upcoming PSP spin-off *Yakuza: Black Panther*. The live-action show is part of the greater marketing push for the game, which includes a manga series as well. The 11-part series will air on Thursday nights and its story will be separate from that of the game, despite featuring the same characters.



The End of Yakuza?



Not long ago I wrote about a new PSP game that might have been *Yakuza 5*. That game turned out to be PSP spin-off *Black Panther*. The real *Yakuza 5* made its debut in *Famitsu* this month... kind of. Sega bought two full pages in the leading Japanese mag to show off a pre-rendered shot of Kamurocho, the series' main setting, in ruins. A caption reading 'The End' runs across both pages. Within minutes of the mag hitting shelves, fans were speculating about a post-apocalyptic *Yakuza*. As wacky as the story can get, I don't think *Yakuza 5* will have Kazuma Kiryu fighting zombies. It's more likely that the game takes place in the aftermath of an earthquake.

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UNLEASH TRUTH

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LUCASARTS

The Vault

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The toys, trinkets and tailoring that has our fires burning this month



Princess Leia Shoes

$60 at ShopAdidas.com

There's a whole series of superb Adidas/*Star Wars* gear available if you hunt around for it, including a series of trainers inspired by all the most iconic characters and ships. This one has taken its cue from Princess Leia in *Return Of The Jedi* in case you hadn't worked it out.



Tekken Plush Figures

$4.99 each at MugenToys.com

Who wouldn't like to cuddle up with Nina Williams? How about Paul Phoenix? Of course you would, because you know if someone tries to cause you some trouble while you're asleep they would kick some butt to protect you. These won't be fighting, but they're good for cuddling.



Rampage shirt

£14.99 at GenkiGear.co.uk

Genki's selection of Japanese-inspired shirts are completely unique and this shirt gives nods to *Godzilla* and the classic Midway arcade game *Rampage*. You can get it oceania and charcoal colour depending on what you prefer, but either way this is a pretty cool shirt.



Resident Evil Zombie Figure

$15.99 at MugenToys.com

There are always *Resident Evil* figures around, but few manage to capture the horror and odd humour of the series like this one. We love the little head tilt of this guy as if to say, 'you want to be dessert?' No, we do not. Thanks all the same. Definitely one for the fans.



The Art Of God Of War III

£41.24 at ForbiddenPlanet.co.uk

For all the blood and gore that *God Of War* is known for, Kratos's last adventure was one set in an amazingly detailed world. This collection of concept and design art is a great guide to how Sony brought about an amazing game to PS3. There's still some gore in there too of course.



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To The Stars

£16.79 at MySoti.com

We're not entirely sure what's going on here, but we like it. Monsters with large mouths, we like. Ghosts, we like. Red balloons, we like. Basically it's all good.

Puft Rider

£17.50 at MySoti.com

Mr Stay Puft riding a horse. How big would that horse need to be? Who would clean up after it? It's questions like these that we like shirts to invite.

CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 30 September and 27 October. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-shirts.

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Guitar Hero: Lars Umlaut Figure

£5.36 at Play.com

Of all the characters in *Guitar Hero* Lars is one of our faves. He embodies all that is great about the lunacy of rock. He works the guitar like a madman. Anyway, Lars is a modern gaming icon in our minds and always will be.





American McGee's Alice Cosplay

$59.99 at PartyCity.com

There are no shortage of Alice cosplayers out there, but few decide to base their costume on American McGee's heroine who will shortly be making her debut on PlayStation. It's an odd mix of Victorian chic and goth brutality that could prove tricky for budding cosplayers. This solves those troubles.



Borderlands Claptrap Figure

£12.99 at Play.com

One of *Borderlands*' most-loved characters is also the first to be immortalised in plastic as an action figure. Not only that, but Claptrap has a bunch of sound effects from the game. We're sure the other main characters will appear soon, too.

Final Fantasy XIII Soundtrack

£39.77 at Play-Asia.com

This special edition version of the *FFXIII* soundtrack includes four discs of music from the game (around 85 tracks) plus an audio drama from the script writer and a new art book. You couldn't ask for a better package and *Final Fantasy* always has great music.





Call Of Duty British Spec Ops Figure

£29.99 at Play.com

Call Of Duty was never the kind of series you would have expected lots of goodies from, but as it's become a global brand there are all sorts of new figures available. Not to mention the crazy stuff you get with special editions of the game itself.



Portal 2 Test Candidate Shirt

$19.99 at Store.ValveSoftware.com

It's great to know that *Portal 2* is coming to PS3 and now we can display our pleasure with this Test Subject shirt direct from Valve's store. You can probably expect more *Portal 2*-related merchandise in the coming months, too.

Hang In There Shirt

$15.99 at ThinkGeek.com

Inspired by *Uncharted 2*'s opening sequence, this tee has made us wonder why there isn't more *Uncharted* merchandise out there. We should be swimming in Chloe Frazer action figures and Nathan Drake underwear by now.



HIGH FIVE

Five of the best... gaming statues

Cammy

£119.99 at Forbidden Planet.co.uk

There are lots of great *Street Fighter* statues out there, but for us the pick of the bunch is Cammy. We like that it's not too over the top or excessively revealing either.



Lara Croft

£219.99 at Forbidden Planet.co.uk

Legendary comic artist Adam Hughes drew the concept sketch for this statue before it was crafted. The final item is an excellent likeness of Lara.



Kratos

£229.99 at Play.com

The Ghost Of Sparta is just about the most fitting videogame character to be immortalised as a statue. It's only a shame that it's not made out of bronze and 17 feet fall rather than 17 inches.



Dante £54.75 at Play.com

Devil May Cry has had plenty of statues made for it, which is quite surprising. We guess it's something to do with the impressive gun and sword combo.



Sonic The Hedgehog

£99.99 at Play.com

Sonic's gaming rep may have been tarnished in recent years but there's still something about this Super Sonic form that makes us happy. Perhaps it's thoughts of a simpler age?



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AND FINALLY...

W[illegible]ype and hyperbole are welcome



THE HONO(U)RABLE GENTLEMAN

Medal Of Honor reboot finally gets attention from politicians and press

THEY SAY: UK defence secretary Dr Liam Fox has called for EA's upcoming FPS *Medal Of Honor* to be banned since it allows you to play as Taliban fighters in its multiplayer. One of the maps is also supposed to be based on Helmand Province, the region where a large number of British troops are based. "I'm disgusted and angry," Fox told the press association. "It's hard to believe any citizen of our country would wish to buy such an un-British game. I would urge retailers to show their support for our armed forces and ban this tasteless product."

WE SAY: It's beside the point to mention that there are no British troops in the *MOH* multiplayer and sort of beside the point that as a multiplayer mode the 'Taliban' in the game are just skins on avatars fighting against other skinned avatars that look a bit like US forces. *MOH* isn't preaching or making any political comments, according to EA. Anyway, we have full respect for EA's Frank Gibeau for this response to the controversy, which was also picked up by Fox News in America. "At EA we believe games are an art form, and I don't know why films and books set in Afghanistan don't get flak, yet [games] do," Gibeau told Develop. "Whether it's *Red Badge Of Courage* or *The Hurt Locker*, the media of its time can be a platform for the people who wish to tell their stories. Games are becoming that platform."

word on the tweet

IGLevine
"BTW, the dude with the hands in the *BioShock Infinite* trailer is so NOT a Big Daddy."
Ken Levine, creative director of Irrational Games clears up some confusion.

IT'S PLAYSTATION FOOTBALL

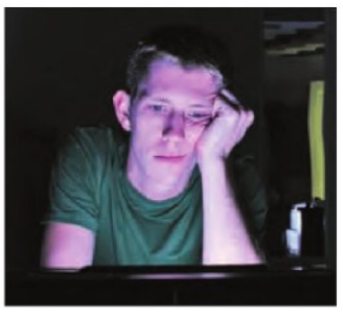
Chelsea manager hails videogame performances



THEY SAY: Chelsea's Italian coach recently hailed Chelsea's early season Premier League form as 'PlayStation football' after putting six past both Wigan and West Brom. "It is impossible to think we are always going to score six goals in a game, this is not real football, this is PlayStation," said Ancelotti. "Our best quality is we are able to counter attack fantastically well. When we have space it is difficult for the opponent to control us." The results have led many to write off the title for this season, making Chelsea firm favourites to retain it after doing the double in the last campaign.

WE SAY: Yet another example of how the PlayStation brand has become so well known that it is often used as a term to refer to all videogaming. Two back-to-back six-nil victories certainly sounds like the kind of thing more common to games of football on a console, though. The big question for us is exactly what PlayStation football game are Chelsea most like? Is it *FIFA*, *Pro Evo* or some other long-forgotten franchise. You can find out what we thought on page 23.

stop please



Love of the game

THEY SAY: Sports psychotherapist Steve Pope has told the *Daily Star* that a number of top-flight footballers have come to him for help with videogame addiction issues in recent months.
WE SAY: Addiction or just playing games too often when they should be thinking about going to bed or training? We wonder.



OMG, actor plays games

THEY SAY: Shockingly, Michael Cera, star of *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World* played games while on set to get into character. "I played *Super Mario Bros. 3* a lot and *Contra* and *Battletoads*," he revealed.
WE SAY: Cera's 22 years old. Show us a 22 year old who doesn't play videogames for crying out loud.



Blooper Reel

THEY SAY: A shocking video taken during a *Gran Turismo 5* demo shows that the game has appalling load times with one of the tracks taking over 90 seconds to become playable after selection.
WE SAY: The video was a hoax, slowed down to make load times seem worse. The gamescom demo we saw was fine.

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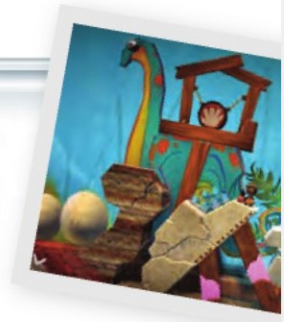
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Reload

The very best of the Play Blog this month

5 Places PlayStation Move won't work



● **BEHIND A WALL** The PlayStation Eye cannot see through walls. This is a major design flaw on Sony's part as X-ray technology is clearly going to be the next battleground of this generation. Sony is giving up ground to Nintendo and Microsoft here if you ask us as we're sure both has this tech in development.

● **FOG** Low visibility locations such as foggy streets are no good for Move as the Eye will not be able to see the light from the end of the controller. Given Kinect's infrared detection you may well be able to use the Xbox 360 motion controller in foggy conditions. This remains unconfirmed at this time.

● **HALL OF MIRRORS** Again we have an issue with the PlayStation Eye here, as it will likely be confused by the multiple images it will be picking up. With so many reflections of the controller orb it may have difficulty picking up your movements accurately. Bruce Lee would have hated Move.

● **UNDER WATER** One of the biggest flaws of PlayStation Move's design is its reliance on an electrical current to make it work. This severely limits where you will be able to set up a Move gaming session with family and friends. Playing Move underwater therefore is completely out of the question.

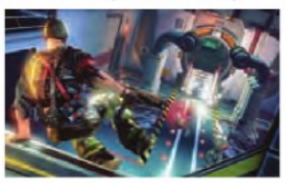
● **MIDDAY IN THE DESERT** At night in the desert you'll be fine setting up some Move gaming, but at the peak of the day you'll have problems. Putting dehydration to one side for the moment, the intense light will hide your Move controller from the PlayStation Eye. Oh dear.

http://bit.ly/deyqVM

Play's games of gamescom

http://bit.ly/dukVej

> BRINK (BETHESDA)



Splash Damage's new multiplayer shooter continues to look the business. That just goes to show how forward thinking it was to begin with.

> DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION (SQUARE ENIX)



One mission played three times in three different ways. That was Eidos Montreal proving that the promise of choice in its new game was a lot more than just talk.

> LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 (SONY)



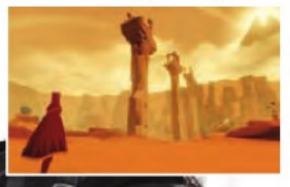
As well as creating and editing your own tunes, *LBP 2*'s music creation tool allows you to create sequences of events for spawning new areas of your level.

> GRAN TURISMO 5 (SONY)



Beautiful, complex and clearly a work of singular commitment to excellence, Kazunori Yamauchi's latest game is the definitive *Gran Turismo* experience.

> JOURNEY (SONY)



Mysterious and absolutely gorgeous to look at, thatgamecompany's *Journey* – the developer's follow-up to *Flower* – is really showing its ambition.

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STAT ATTACK

105

billion dollars – the estimated worth of the global games industry

But which PlayStation game are Chelsea like?



http://bit.ly/glyMzvP

Carlo Ancelotti recently described a result as being like 'PlayStation football' but which footy games are like Chelsea?

> **PRO EVO** Because Malouda has always been good in this series, even before he was actually good in the Premiership.

> **FIFA** Because defenders are prone to making stupid mistakes for no apparent reason, just like John Terry often does.

> **PURE FOOTBALL** Not this one, as Stevie G is nothing to do with Chelsea. Also Chelsea play a good game of football.

> **FOOTBALL MANAGER** If Ancelotti is using a downloaded tactic that would explain all of the massive wins.

That's our guess, based on the fact the Chelsea manager clearly wanted us to over-analyse his comment in such a daft way.

What if PlayStation Home was real?

1 COSPLAY WOULD BE A WAY OF LIFE



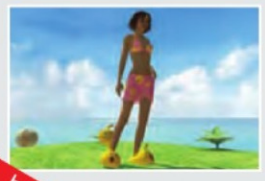
Dressing as videogame characters is a niche activity, but in Home it's the only way to be. People wearing civilian clothing is weird.

2 LIVING ROOMS WOULD BE REALLY ODD



Wow, is that a fountain next to your sofa? Is that a barbecue beside the coffee table? Such is the oddity of the Home living space.

3 A SEX CHANGE IS EASY (AND REVERSIBLE)

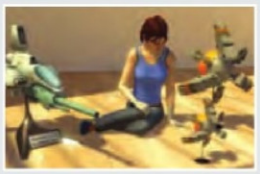


Ever wondered what it would be like to live as the opposite gender? Well in Home, gender-altering operations are just a click away.

4 VISIT EXOTIC WORLDS In the real world the most exotic we can get is some dull islands with sand and surf. If Home were real then these destinations would be truly exotic.



5 YOU'LL HAVE LOTS OF COOL TOYS



In your peculiar living rooms you'll have an amazing collection of videogame toys that would never exist in the real world.

6 GAMES WOULD BE A BIT RUBBISH



The disappointing downside of having Home be real, despite all the advantages, is that games would be a bit crap.

http://bit.ly/gl5fCh

IN CONCLUSION If Home was real the world would be odder and more colourful, but we'd have very little to do other than fill our living rooms with strange ornaments.

Arkham City: why Catwoman looks like Audrey Hepburn

AS THE FIRST screens of *Batman: Arkham City* emerged one thing that struck us was Rocksteady's depiction of Catwoman. It reminded us of two things. One was the actress Audrey Hepburn, star of *Breakfast At Tiffany's*. The second was one particular Catwoman artist who seems to have redefined how we think about the world's greatest cat burglar.



The artist is Adam Hughes, who is one of the most gifted comic artists around. He started doing the covers to Catwoman's comic and has helped to make her cool again.

During his cover-only stint between 2005 and 2008 he created some of the most iconic images of Catwoman ever seen. And his inspiration? "For the longest time I played around asking 'Who is Selina Kyle, what is she like?'" he said.

"And then I realised I really liked the Fifties and Sixties *To Catch A Thief* feel. I just went 'That's her!' She is this kind of Fifties Audrey Hepburn kind of character with way too much eyebrow make-up and short black hair. And I went, 'Perfect! That is it!'"

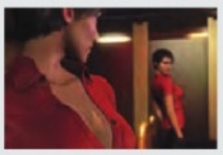
It was his interpretation of Catwoman that influenced Rocksteady in Arkham City. It will be interesting to see how some of the other new characters turn out.

Check out some of Hughes's art at www.justsayah.com

http://bit.ly/cXykho

Top 5 movie tributes in games

5 TRUE LIES HEAVY RAIN



The Sexy Girl Chapter draws from Jamie Lee Curtis in *True Lies*. First Madison makes her skirt shorter, puts on make-up and messes up her hair. Then there's the strip scene.

4 BACK TO THE FUTURE BURNOUT PARADISE



The Jansen 88 Special from *Burnout*'s 'Legendary Cars' DLC pack bears more than a passing resemblance to a certain time-travelling DeLorean. It can even fly.

3 STAR WARS DEAD RISING 2



You can't make Lightsabers in *Dead Rising 2*. You can make laser swords, but that's different. Any resemblance between laser swords and Lightsabers is entirely coincidental.

2 BLUES BROTHERS SKATE 2



Skate had a pretty awesome live-action opening sequence. So good that there was only one way to top it in *Skate 2* – paying tribute to *The Blues Brothers*.

1 TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS



One of the best *GTA* missions ever is 'Just Business' in which you escape a gang on a dirt bike. An homage to the flood control chase in *Terminator 2*.

http://bit.ly/aWkimu

Top 5 strip clubs in games

5 BOOTYLICIOUS DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL



Bootylicious is (probably) Duke Nukem's favourite strip club. At least it is until a bunch of heavily armed pigs show up and totally ruin the seedy yet erotic atmosphere of the place.

4 AFTERLIFE MASS EFFECT 2



It doesn't matter where you go in the galaxy, an Asari table dance is always the same. But the drinks can vary in strength, so don't drink too many or you might miss some blue boobies.

3 TECHNICALLY LEGAL SAINTS ROW 2



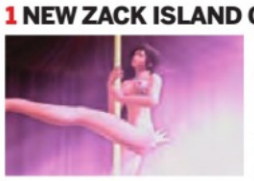
It seems a shame to storm into a place of such natural beauty as Technically Legal and kill everyone in sight, but needs must. It's a Ronin stronghold and therefore has to be taken over.

2 HONKERS GRAND THEFT AUTO IV



GTA has had more different strip clubs in it than any other game series and while Honkers may not have the best name it does have the best girls. Only in *GTA IV* can you get a two-girl lap dance.

1 NEW ZACK ISLAND CASINO DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME 2



This isn't a strip club, but if you get the jackpot nine times on 'The Target' slot machine, you'll get pole dancing sequences.

http://bit.ly/csxtgm

5 TOP TEST TRACK COMBOS

There are many cars in Gran Turismo 5. There is also the Top Gear test track. These are the five best combinations of the two, in our (not very) humble opinion



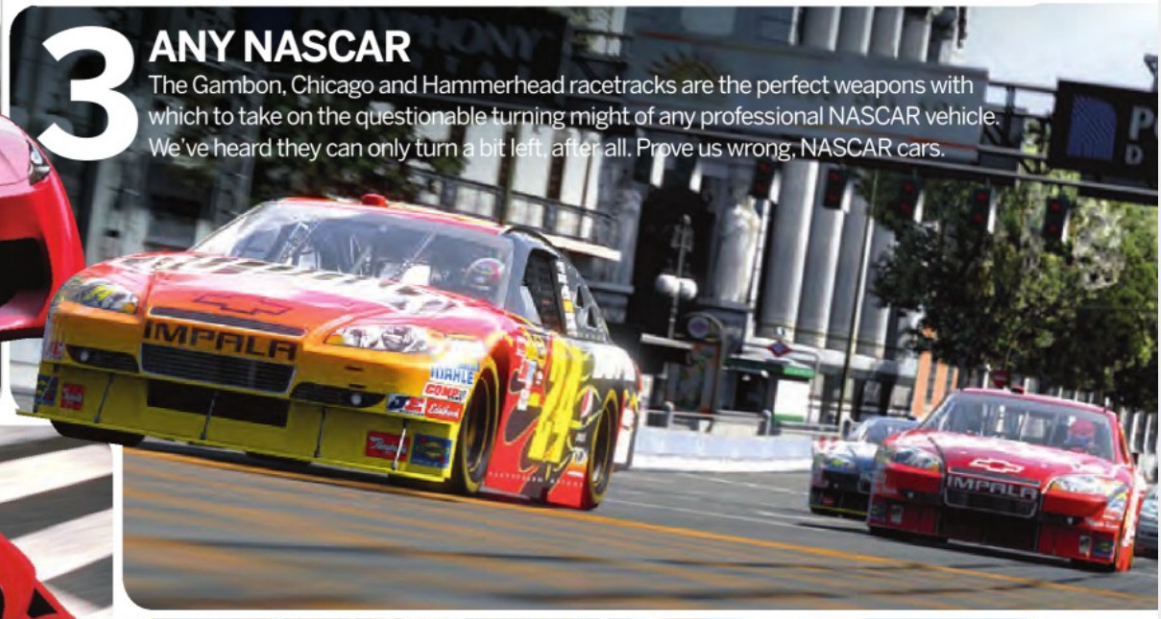
5 TOYOTA FT-86 CONCEPT

This one was an easy choice for three very simple reasons. One: there are loads of screenshots of the car. Two: we know what the car is as it tells us right there on the numberplate. Three: the car kind of, sort of (if you squint) looks like the future hover cars from *Syndicate*.



4 BITCHIN' CAMARO

Muscle cars are some of the most inherently cool things man has ever created, and – much as we are loathe to admit it – so is the *Top Gear* test track. As such, the combination of these two things in real life could well destroy the world. The combination in-game, however, is less risky.



3 ANY NASCAR

The Gambon, Chicago and Hammerhead racetracks are the perfect weapons with which to take on the questionable turning might of any professional NASCAR vehicle. We've heard they can only turn a bit left, after all. Prove us wrong, NASCAR cars.



2 ENZO FERRARI

Whereas the Lambo would be the mentalists' choice, the Ferrari would be the classy mentalists' choice. Seeing as only a few of these exist it's another one we're unlikely to get to drive really quick on the *Top Gear* track.



1 LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO

We all know Lamborghinis are utterly monstrous vehicles, capable of reducing grown men to quivering wrecks. At least, that's what Jeremy Clarkson has probably told us. We're never going to get to drive one or *on* the *Top Gear* track in real life, so *Gran Turismo 5* is one of the few chances we'll have.

TEAM PICKS

The vehicles we'd take for a spin on the Top Gear test track



MUCK SPREADER

I'd go for a spin around the track in a muck spreader, so that I can cover all the *Top Gear* presenters in the crap that they're all full of already.



DELOREAN

The DeLorean from the *Back To The Future* movies. Though that would technically be cheating, as we wouldn't need roads where we were going.



WANZER

I probably wouldn't put up the fastest time in the history of *Top Gear*, but for sheer visual might I'd have to go with a Wanzer walking tank from *Front Mission*.

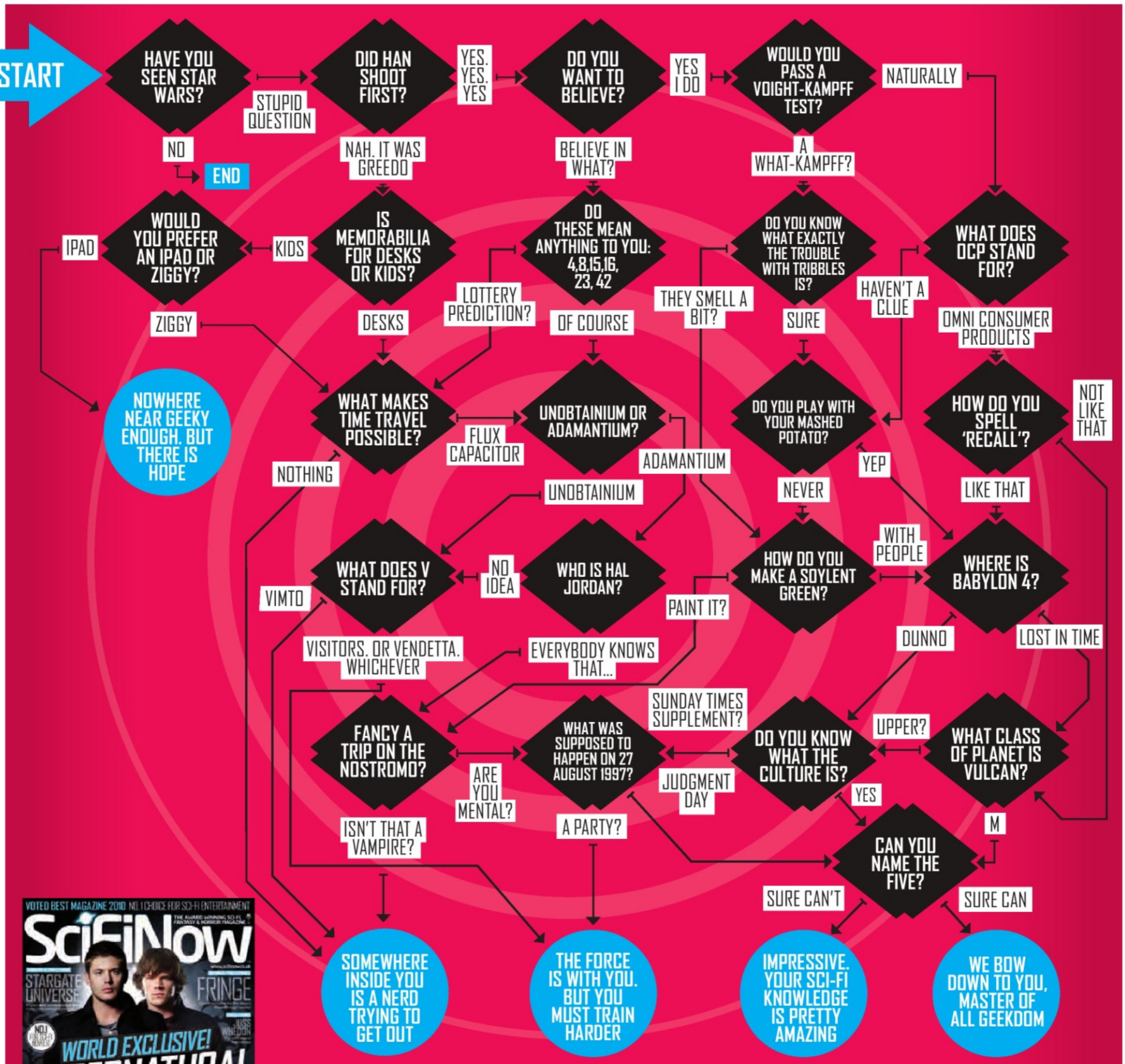


SWEET TOOTH

I like ice cream vans at the best of times but one that dishes out pain as well as 99s would be great to whip around the *Top Gear* track in.

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NEW VEGAS

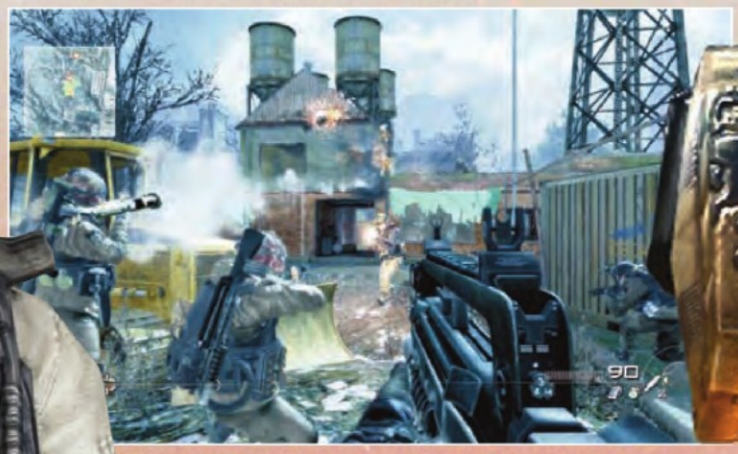
PLAY ♥'s MODERN WARFARE MULTIPLAYER

Over 25 million people have played Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 online, yet it sometimes seems like nearly that many hate it. Can 25 million Modern Warfare fans be wrong? No, of course not. Here's why...



Anyone can play it

Critics would have it that *Modern Warfare* is a game for 'n00bs' and that this is a bad thing. No, being accessible to new players while still compelling to experienced ones is a rare quality. Most online shooters aren't fun for newcomers, who find themselves making no progress at all against experienced players. Beginners on *MW2* can't expect to do well, but they can expect to figure out what they're doing quickly and to earn rewards for their efforts so they feel they're getting somewhere. This is why *Modern Warfare* deserves to be so popular, and why its formula is so often imitated these days.



You get to kill really annoying people

Annoying people – many of them kids who shouldn't be playing adult games in the first place – are a problem in *Modern Warfare*. But the flip side of this is that it is so much more satisfying and rewarding to hunt down and destroy annoying people than non-annoying people. Locating a pair of boosters and lobbing a grenade their way, wiping both players and their stupid Tactical Insertion off the map in one go is one of gaming's greatest pleasures. Of course we'd prefer to play an online game without the idiots, but there's no point in holding such unrealistic hopes, is there?

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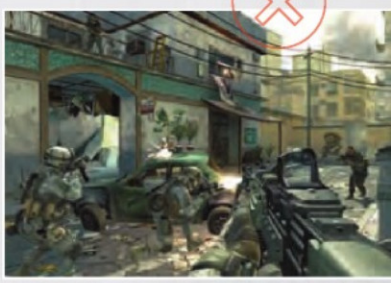






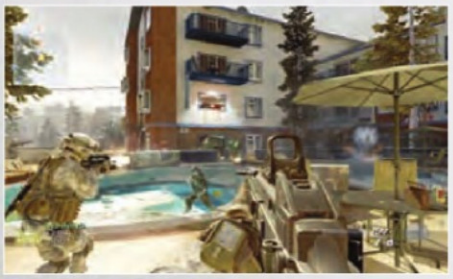
There are loads of people playing it

The main reason *Modern Warfare* gets hated on, of course, is because it's popular. The more popular something gets the more hated it will get – it's just the way of the world. But being popular is extremely beneficial for an online game. It makes matchmaking really fast and means you can always find a game of any match type you want. Plus you know there's always going to be at least one person on your friends list playing it if you feel like being sociable. The only problem with it being so popular is that eight figure numbers don't fit on the leaderboards properly.











It's just plain good

If you can't recognise the quality, the polish, the refinement and the smart design of *Modern Warfare*'s multiplayer portion, then you just don't know a good game when you see one. It may not be the most in-depth, skill-based, challenging game of its kind, but it does what it does incredibly well. Ideas like the Killcam and the Killstreak system really set *MW* apart – they're simple twists on established forms that level the playing field and enhance the whole experience.







You can tailor it to your own style

Another weird thing you see people moaning about is how you can use certain combinations of equipment and perks to make certain tactics especially effective, as if that's not *the whole idea.* "Oh, he's using a grenade launcher with Scavenger and Danger Close – it's so cheap!" So what? That's his *style*! Yeah, it's boring and one-dimensional, but that's his problem, not anyone else's. The best *Modern Warfare* players don't use these kinds of tactics because the best are versatile, so really the game's not rewarding cheapness at all. If you can't outsmart someone who's just doing the same thing over and over again then you only have yourself to blame.



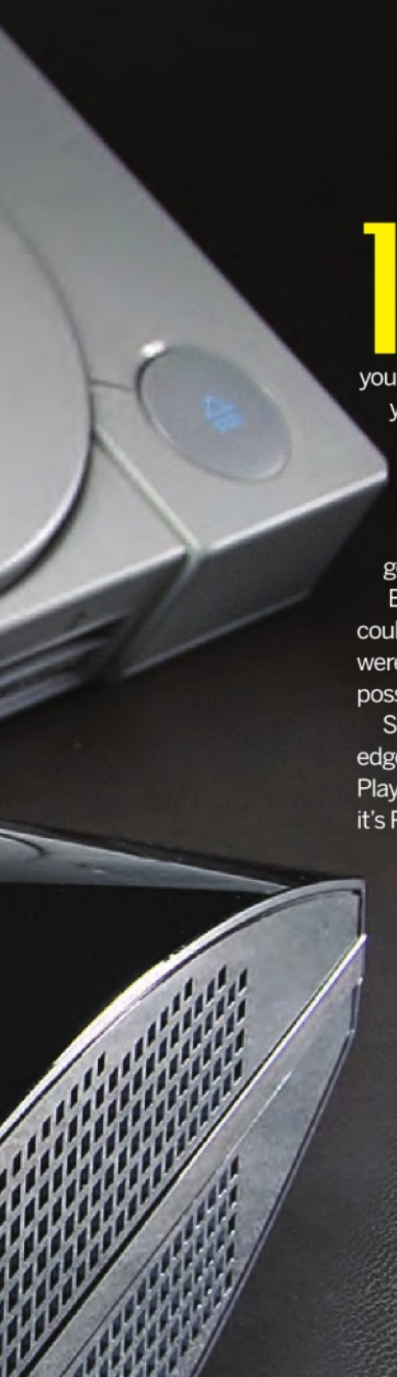
IT'S BECOME UNFASHIONABLE to heap praise upon *Modern Warfare* and *Modern Warfare 2*'s multiplayer, but we're not the elitist type so we're going to go right ahead and do that. It might not be perfect, but it's still the best game of its kind ever and deserves every one of its 25 million players. And if we're wrong, then may God strike us down with a Tactical Nuke.

15 WAYS PLAYSTATION CHANGED EVERYTHING

THEY SAY A CHANGE IS AS GOOD AS A REST. IT'S NOT, A REST IS MUCH BETTER. BUT A CHANGE IS STILL VERY GOOD BECAUSE THINGS CAN'T IMPROVE IF THEY DON'T CHANGE, WHICH IS WHY CHANGING EVERYTHING IS AWESOME. THE PLAYSTATION, OUR FAVOURITE THING IN THE WHOLE WORLD, IS ALWAYS CHANGING EVERYTHING. ALLOW US TO ELABORATE...



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1 Bleeding edge gaming technology *in your home*

Before 1994, there was a huge gulf in class between home videogames and arcade games. If you wanted to play something as pant-wettingly awesome as an arcade game in your home in 1990, you had to buy a console called Neo Geo, which literally used the same hardware as SNK arcade machines. The console cost £500 and the games cost £200 each. Adjusted for inflation that's about £850 and £350 in today's money. No normal person owned one. Normal people played dramatically inferior ports of arcade games on their Nintendo, Sega and home computer systems, and occasionally even left their homes with a pocket full of change to go enjoy arcade games in their original, glorious form.

But when the PlayStation was launched, that changed. It was an affordable machine that could play games as good, if not better than arcade games from affordable discs. The **Play** team were all teenagers at the time, and we can all remember hardly believing such a thing could be possible – but there it was, right in front of us.

Since then, arcade gaming has seen rapid decline and the PlayStation has stayed on the cutting edge of gaming technology. People who want the best gaming technology available buy a new PlayStation on launch day. Sure, PC graphics cards always catch up after a few years, but it's PlayStation that always sets the standard.





2 Getting *party gaming* started

With broadband making online gaming faster, more popular and more accessible, many forgot that people might want to play a game together in the same room. But one man saw things very differently. As the PS2 appeared to be reaching the end of its life, Phil Harrison – senior VP of product development at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe – saw a way of increasing the PS2's life and selling a lot more hardware, too. He spearheaded the development of three social gaming projects for the PS2 – *EyeToy*, *Buzz!* and *SingStar* – and started 'banging the drum' about social gaming to his bosses in Japan. But they weren't listening and the birth of social gaming on PS2 would be something only really celebrated in Europe. Still, Harrison was right and the PS2 still sold millions of units worldwide thanks largely to the projects he had pushed into development, but also thanks to one other...

Sony's impact on social gaming can be traced back even further to *PaRappa The Rapper*, which directly inspired Harmonix to make music games and it was Harmonix that made music games social with *Guitar Hero*. And what platform did *GH* originally and exclusively appear on? PlayStation.



3 Games get *real*

Even in the PlayStation's early days, games still looked like games, but that all changed in 1997, with the release of *Gran Turismo*. Looking back at it now, the scenery is all blocky and pixelated, but if you squint your eyes and sit back from the screen a bit, the cars are still pretty convincing. It was a huge step forward for both graphics and physics, and completely redefined expectations of what games could be. Nowadays games are so realistic it's possible to use a PS3 and a copy of *FIFA 11* to convince your granddad he's just seen West Ham beat Man Utd 7-0. But that was inconceivable before *Gran Turismo*.



It's hard to believe when you put it next to *GT5*, but *Gran Turismo* looked *so* real when it first came out.

4 Millions of developers only on PlayStation

For as long as computers have existed, there have been hobbyists who create their own applications, games and modifications. Communities of these enthusiasts would thrive and sometimes evolve into actual game developers. But there was a barrier of entry to game development as a mere pastime – namely the steep learning curve of the tools necessary to do it. If only there was a way to make game development accessible, fun *and* satisfying... now, thanks to PlayStation, there is. *LittleBigPlanet*, soon to be superseded by *LBP 2*, allows and encourages people to make games, and millions of PS users do just that. Making the tools *fun* to use, that was what changed everything.



God Of War – a Sony classic.





With PlayStation comes great Sony Computer Entertainment 5

If Sony was to develop, produce and market its own games console and software, then it would need to form a new subsidiary so, in 1993, Sony Computer Entertainment was born. Initially SCE had no software development studios of its own, and was focused on developing the hardware and attracting third-party developers and publishers to it. With time, though, Sony would acquire and set up numerous development studios around the world.

The total combined might of SCE as a developer and publisher is now truly formidable. Can any other company boast a roster as successful, as influential or as varied as this? *Gran Turismo*, *LittleBigPlanet*, *Uncharted*, *God Of War*, *Killzone*, *Ratchet & Clank*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *WipEout*, *Syphon Filter*, *Everybody's Golf*, *MotorStorm*, *Resistance*, *LocoRoco*, *Ico*, *Jak And Daxter*, *Twisted Metal*, *Forbidden Siren*, *PaRappa The Rapper*, *Patapon*, *SOCOM*, *SingStar* and many more...



Anyone can create a game with *LBP*.

6 With all *these awesome characters*, who needs a mascot?

In the Eighties and early-Nineties there were consoles for people who liked Italian plumbers and there were consoles for people who liked blue hedgehogs. The console wars were all about aligning yourself to a single cartoon figurehead back then. It was all a bit childish and a bit limiting. In Japan, the PlayStation has had a mascot since 1999, although even there Toro the cat is nowhere near as all-consuming as Mario or Sonic were, and generally Sony doesn't go for the whole mascot thing. No, Sony had the wacky, crazy notion that in order for a gaming platform to have broad appeal that it should be represented by a varied range of characters. From old-guard stalwarts like Cloud Strife, Lara Croft and Solid Snake to current-gen stars like Kratos and Nathan Drake, the PlayStation has always had heroes to suit all tastes. And not just people who are into faceless, green space soldiers.

Nathan Drake is one of many iconic Sony game characters.

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7 From 3D graphics to *3D display technology*

The PlayStation was the first gaming platform on which the majority of games used polygonal 3D graphics. It could even coat these polygons in textures and throw unprecedented numbers of them around at high speeds. "Oh my God! 3D gaming!" everyone said at the time.

Then this year the PS3 became the first gaming platform to support proper 3D gaming. Not the old-fashioned 3D with the doubled images and cellophane glasses. No, this must be the real thing because of the ridiculous cost involved in experiencing it. The TV will cost you a couple of grand and even the glasses are at least £60 a throw. Before long, though, everyone will be able to afford it and will be saying, "Oh my God! 3D gaming!" again. And again, it's all thanks to PlayStation.





We've seen both *Killzone 3* and *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* in 3D.



8 Full motion video kick-starts *the storytelling revolution*

If a pre-PlayStation game wanted to tell a story with any more depth than 'Italian plumber rescues princess from spiky turtle' it had to use text and everyone knows that, as a rule, the more text you put in a game, the less fun it becomes. For this reason, story-driven games just weren't very popular back then. But with the PlayStation came FMV cut-scenes, video sequences – usually computer-generated, but sometimes even live-action – that could be interspersed with gameplay to tell stories in efficient, exciting ways. FMV would fall out of favour as game engines started to get good enough to be used for high-quality cut-scenes, but it nonetheless played an important part in triggering the shift towards storytelling.



FMV allowed games like *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Onimusha: Warlords* to tell engaging, epic stories.



Resident Evil and *Tomb Raider* were both huge steps towards movie-esque presentation.

9 *Beating movies* at their own game

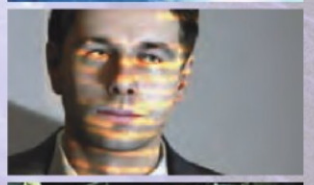
When CD-ROMs first started being used for games, developers were all like, 'games can become like interactive movies now', and went on to take this idea far too literally. A string of games consisting of loads of expensive but piss-poor live-action footage and virtually no gameplay, like *Night Trap* and *The 7th Guest*, were released and the movie industry laughed in the games industry's face.

But as we now know, games would eventually usurp movies – games now outsell DVDs and Blu-rays combined – and where did the first signs of a genuine threat come from? The PlayStation.

Again, it took a couple of years for devs to get a handle on things, but in 1996, two titles arrived on the PlayStation that showed the world that games could be like movies without compromising gameplay – *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*. Again, both seem crude by today's standards, but at the time it was revolutionary to see gameplay blended so seamlessly with narrative, characterisation and cinematic set pieces.

And in the 21st Century, PlayStation games have star-studded premieres and voice actors you've heard of and don't just feel like movies – they feel like *blockbuster* movies. And it's no coincidence that a lot of movies, particularly in the sci-fi and action genres, are starting to feel a lot like videogames.











10 The *mass* effect

One of the most significant changes gaming has ever seen was the seismic shift from gaming as a pastime for enthusiasts and children, to gaming as mainstream entertainment and as a part of a normal, everyday lifestyle. The PlayStation was the first console to become a regular fixture in the living room, as opposed to the bedroom – this was a *huge* step.

It's true that the PlayStation was in the right place at the right time – it was just becoming *possible* to make games that could appeal to a mainstream audience when it arrived – but credit has to be given to Sony for its vision and its skilful marketing.

While the PlayStation's move from Sony Corporation to Sony Music was presumably intended as a relegation by the execs who insisted on it, the lifestyle marketing expertise this afforded the project access to proved invaluable, not to mention revolutionary. The branding was cool and iconic and the advertising, while aimed at a teenage market at first, soon evolved in a bold new direction that, unbelievably, *did not focus on games*. The 'Double Life' advertising campaign featured no game footage at all, instead presenting PlayStation gaming as a lifestyle and a philosophy. Gaming was (just about) cool at last, and gamers had the PlayStation to thank for that.

11 It only does everything - PlayStation as *a multimedia platform*

When it was first conceived, the PlayStation was such an unpopular idea within Sony that the project was relocated to Sony Music to appease senior executives who thought it was a waste of time and money. But it wasn't long before everyone at Sony saw that it was nothing of the sort, and could even be combined with other technologies and projects in the name of convergence.

It might seem like nothing, but the simple fact that the PlayStation could play music CDs was quite a big deal back in 1994. It would be the first of the PlayStation's multimedia functions, which now encompass a full range of services and all of the very latest technology. If you've got a PS3 and an HDTV (perhaps a Sony one that came bundled with your PS3) then there isn't a form of electronic home entertainment you can't enjoy.

12 It's *all* in your hands

Have you ever noticed how iPhone owners always bitch about how their iPhone is nothing but trouble with regard to actually being used as a phone, but maintain it's still worth every penny because of all the other things it does. Well, the PSP has been doing all of those things for longer and for cheaper. Gaming, music, movies, utility software, web browsing, reading and, since firmware 3.90, you've even been able to use it as a somewhat problematic phone thanks to the addition of Skype support. So yeah, all that stuff supposed 'smartphones' can do – you saw it first on PlayStation.

13 Come in, the *game's open*

In terms of game design, the biggest shift to have happened during the last ten years has to be that towards open-world, sandbox gaming. The game that instigated it was *Grand Theft Auto III*, and the console *GTA III* debuted on was the PlayStation 2. Open-ended, free-roaming games had already existed for a long time before *GTA III – Elite*, *Mercenary* and the first two *GTA*s, for example – but this was really the first time a game had taken place in a vast 'living' 3D world that would go about its business if you left it be, and react dynamically to your actions if you didn't. Before the PS2, games hardware couldn't handle something as large-scale, detailed and complex as *GTA III*. But once the breakthrough was made, sandbox games, much like actual sand, got absolutely everywhere whether you liked it or not.



GTA III really opened the PlayStation up to sandbox gaming.



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14 *Dual*-wielding

Analogue game control has been around for about as long as games have, but for a long time it was barely used. There hadn't been much use for it during the 8-bit and 16-bit eras, but when games started to go 3D, an inability to move in more than eight directions became a hindrance. Nintendo addressed this issue with the single, central thumbstick on the N64 controller, and Sony followed with its Dual Analog controller, this one boasting *two* sticks.

At the time, few people understood how a second stick might be of use and very few PSone games made much use of it. A lot of PlayStation owners only had ordinary digital pads, so most developers didn't put much time or effort into analogue control. But when the PS2 was released, bundled with a DualShock 2 controller as standard... everything changed.

We can still remember the first time we played *TimeSplitters*. It seemed crazy that it used both sticks and that the shoulder buttons had suddenly become the primary action keys. But after some practice it made sense. It seems like such a small thing, but we reckon over half of all PS3 games would be unplayable without dual stick control, which shows what a massive innovation it really was. If anyone ever tries to play down Sony's contributions to controller design, tell them where to *stick* it.

Ape Escape was the first game to *require* the use of two analogue sticks, but it was FPSs like *TimeSplitters* that really took advantage.

15 Hey Nintendo! *Hands off!*

For 15 years, one company held total dominion over the handheld gaming market. One company – Nintendo. One brand – Game Boy.

Sega, Atari, SNK and Bandai all tried to get their own piece of the handheld action, but all failed to get a foothold in a market Nintendo greedily considered its own.

But in 2004, the PSP arrived and, for the first time, Nintendo had a serious challenge on its hands. The PSP arrived at almost exactly the same time as Nintendo's DS and, for the first year or so, it was a very tight contest between the two, with the DS just edging a lead. But then Nintendo improved the design of the DS and started a marketing onslaught that would see the market for handhelds expanding into lucrative new demographics like women, old people and A-list Hollywood stars. The PSP couldn't compete with that, but it continued to sell strongly in its own right, racking up 60 million sales (and counting) worldwide. So next time someone tries to tell you the PSP 'failed', point out it's sold 10 million more than the SNES ever did. See if they think the SNES was a failure.

Despite what some people claim, the PSP *has* been a success.

RE:PLAY

This month, the best, most funniest, beardiest letter we've ever had, starring Brian Blessed as... himself



This month's letters answered by: **Gavin Mackenzie, Don Cannelloni**

We get a lot of letters asking us how to become games journalists, but this is the first time we've been asked how to become game scriptwriters. The answer is kinda complicated and, to be honest, a lot of games journalists harbour ambitions to become scriptwriters, too. My game would star a hero called Zap Blastanoid who is a Space Ranger from the post-apocalyptic year 2099. The story is that some aliens showed up in the galaxy and Zap was sent to destroy them in case they're not very nice. It will be emotional and mature.

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★STAR letter

Gaming Chair Access

I'm 27, female, married and play more games than my husband! Oh, and I'm also in a wheelchair, although we lovingly refer to it as my 'gaming chair'.

As I'm now largely housebound, a **Play** subscription is a *very* precious thing. Post to cheer me up, new games to obsess about and plenty of content. I, like lots of people living with a serious disability, have chronic pain, which really affects my concentration. I went to Cambridge and still have a brain in there somewhere, but I find reading and writing jolly hard work. In short, articles are this girl's best friend.

Never have I read a magazine for serious gamers that is so cerebral. Your articles are well crafted, terse and show real love for the subject and the English language. I love you for that. I'm sick of reading magazines that expect gamers to be buffoons!

Gaming is a great leveller in our house. It doesn't matter that I can't put on my own shoes and socks – I can still beat my husband at *Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing*! Disabled people can play alongside able-bodied friends and relatives and not feel like the odd one out for a change. I love that it is something where we can feel like equals.

Also, it's a great distraction. Anyone who is in a lot of pain should take up gaming. It doesn't require too much or too little concentration, and US scientists have even proved the real benefits of gaming for those with chronic pain. It still puts a smile on my face, which is no mean feat these days.
Emma Fowler, Ipswich



This is *supposedly* the Ultimate Gaming Chair. Pffft... it doesn't even have wheels.

I don't know how to tell you this, Emma, but Play is targeted at maladjusted 12-year-old boys obsessed with violence and boobies. Don't think because you're a Cambridge graduate and use words like 'cerebral' that you're fooling anyone. Thanks for the positive feedback though.

Also, I now can't shift the image in my mind of you, during a tight *ModNation Racers* contest, jamming forward on the wrong joystick and careering into the TV. Thanks for that, too.

Scripted Moment

It's that time in my life when I have to choose a career. I came up with two things I'm passionate about: gaming and writing. So then it hit me, why don't I combine the two? I could write plot ideas, locations, characters and stories for games. It would be my dream job and every time I think about it I'm more certain that it's the career I want. So what I want to ask is: what's this job called? And do I need to go to a college or university to get the qualifications I need for this job?
Conor Wickham, Duncormick



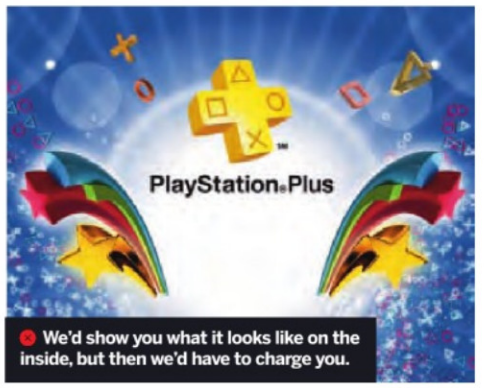
Uncharted 2 was mostly written by Naughty Dog creative director Amy Hennig, who's already well established as a game artist, animator and designer.

We hate to rain on your parade, Conor, but 'videogame scriptwriter' in itself is not really a career. Not at the moment anyway. The people who write the scripts for games are usually either involved in other areas of the game's development as well, or are established fiction writers drafted in to work on specific projects, so there isn't really a direct path into it as far as qualifications and/or experience goes. We'd suggest pursuing English and media-related courses at college, and perhaps doing a scriptwriting course at uni. They'll be geared towards film and TV scriptwriting, but that would at least be a step in the right sort of direction.

Taking The Plus

A few weeks ago, my nine-year-old son (who has an Xbox) told me that Sony was about to start charging for PSN like Xbox do for Xbox Live. I told him to stop being so daft. 'Why would Sony shoot itself in the foot that way?' I asked myself. Yet here in issue 194 is a double page spread on what I can only see as a massive own goal for Sony.

Now I know this is supposed to be a premium service and you won't *have* to pay for it... for now... but how long will that last? The best content is likely to be on there, so I am presuming that those with a PS3 may feel obliged to pay the subscription to access this. There will be exclusives for those who subscribe, but how on earth do you know what you'll be getting? Why not just continue to download the stuff you want and choose to pay for it?



We'd show you what it looks like on the inside, but then we'd have to charge you.

It all seems a little bizarre that now the PS3 is catching the Xbox, Sony would change things and level the playing field in favour of the Xbox. Is it too easy for them at the moment? Please, Sony, do yourself a favour and take a leaf out of the politicians' book and u-turn quicker than Eamonn Holmes who's just seen a pie going in the other direction!
Glen Allott, via email

You're jumping to a few conclusions there, Glen. It seems a bit unfair to call for Sony to make a u-turn on something



Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of EA. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of FIFA 11, which is available from 1 September for the PlayStation 3 (£49.99).

STUPID letter



It is better with the beard, isn't it?

Blessed Relief

I was reading your feature of games that would be better with Brian Blessed's beard (www.play-mag.co.uk/features/six-characters-who-would-be-better-with-brian-blesseds-beard) and read with great amusement, particularly when you put his beard on *Football Manager*. In fact I giggled out loud.

'So what?', I hear you ask. Well I work in an arts enterprise building which provides office space for those in the creative industry. I walk in after my lunch and was introduced to Brian Bloody Blessed who was hosting an event in my town that evening. I looked up, and all I could see was *Football Manager* with *that* beard on and I pissed myself laughing right to his face while my colleagues looked on in horror.

Thank you **Play** mag.

James Koppert, Scarborough

This is the best letter we've received in the 37 issues I've been on **Play**, possibly ever. But it's also stupid, and you had a Star Letter before anyway. I'll now hand over to Ian, who wrote the article in question:

"There are times, as a writer, that I question whether I really can make a difference. Then things like this happen and I realise I can. I really can. I can make a difference, I can change lives and I can make things *better*. I hope you enjoyed the majesty of the Blessed Beard In Real Life, James, I really do."

F.A.Q.

Why's there no *Uncharted* game this year?
Seth Seymour, Tadcaster
Because the *Uncharted* series is not a cash cow.

Which console is the best one?
Sid Rayne, Barrow-Upon-Humber
The one on the left.

I've been thinking of asking my friends to call me 'Flash'.
Kevin Jones, Winkburn
Flash Jones? Or just Flash?

I think Home is really underrated.
Mo Croftfield, Outwoods
You realise that makes you sound like a sex pest, don't you?

Haha! Another epic fail for Microsoft. Sony rules! I love my PlayStation forever!
Peter Waters, Wolverhampton
Did we put a Sony press release in the letters pile again?

I heard that the PlayStation 3 got broken out of jail. I didn't even know it was in jail.
Lee Richards, Ugley Green
They have PS3s in jail? It's like a bloody holiday camp!

THIS MONTH, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...



it has expressed no intention of doing. It has been stated categorically that PlayStation Plus will not affect any existing PSN services, and that includes free online multiplayer gaming.

However, you make a fair point about not really knowing what you're getting from PlayStation Plus, and we're still not really sure what its strongest selling points are, but it's early days yet and hopefully its value will become clear with time.

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Choice topics from the Play forum.
Join the discussion at **www.play-mag.co.uk**

SUBJECT: PLAY MAGAZINE DISCUSSION
Topic: Burning Issues for Play #196
I gave birth to my PS3.
robinz26

SUBJECT: HEADLINES
Topic: Play Mag On Facebook
Lol tidbits.
kev schmit

SUBJECT: GENERAL GAMING
Topic: PlayStation IDs: share here!
At least 50% of the *MW2* community are such huge idiots it's unbelievable.
UberCool_UberGoff

...And That's Final

Do you have or can you get more details on how *FFXIV* will work with PS3 and PC? What I mean specifically is will I need to buy two copies of the game in order to play it on both systems? I'm sure I read somewhere before that you can play your account on both systems but I haven't seen it mentioned anywhere if I need to buy two discs. I know that without the disc installation on the PS3 it may be quite hard, but would Square have any plans for a redeem code to download the client over PSN? I'm only asking because I really want an MMO I can play from the sofa (I'm damned lazy), but I'm also too impatient to wait to try it out on the PS3.
Aaron, County Down

Yes, you will need a copy of the game for each format if you want to play it on both platforms, and it's true that you can use the same account and character on both PC and PS3. So you either need to fork out more money or learn to be either less lazy or more patient.

The BURNING issues
The stuff we want to hear about!



1. Would you like to see *Flash Gordon* star Brian Blessed getting more involved in the games industry?
2. Do any of our readers *not* dream of becoming game developers or games journalists?
3. Whenever you see a piece of PlayStation news, do you automatically assume it's a sign of worse things to come? If so, *why*?



Buying the PC version will only mean getting killed by this thing six months sooner.

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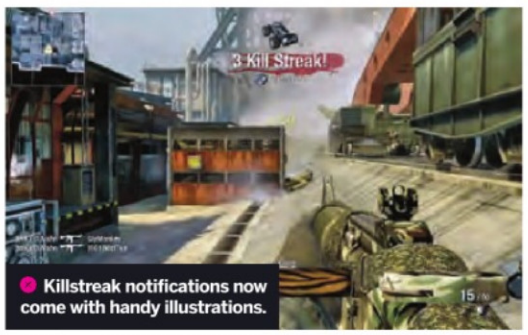
PREVIEW

The games ... will shape ... PlayStation



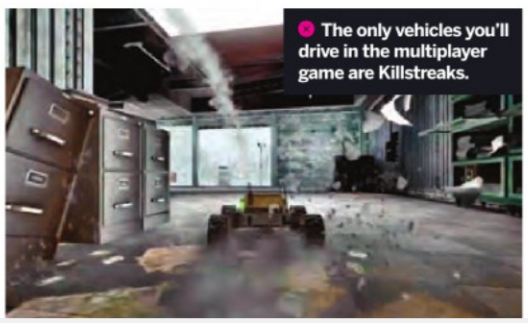
Call Of Duty is still holding out against the trend for snap-to cover systems.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER



Killstreak notifications now come with handy illustrations.





The only vehicles you'll drive in the multiplayer game are Killstreaks.

Call Of Duty: Black Ops

Play chats to Treyarch's community manager Josh Olin and MP lead designer David Vonderhaar about Black Ops' multiplayer

PS3

Why did you remove Perks that increase or decrease damage?

David Vonderhaar: It was part of the design philosophy to decide whether or not J-Noob and Stopping Power would be in the game. The trouble with these things is that anytime you modify the player's perceived value of health or damage, you can confuse the experience for people, and it makes it difficult to understand 'why am I dying so quickly?' or 'why aren't I killing this guy?' All it does is frustrate gamers.

So what do you believe makes a good Perk?

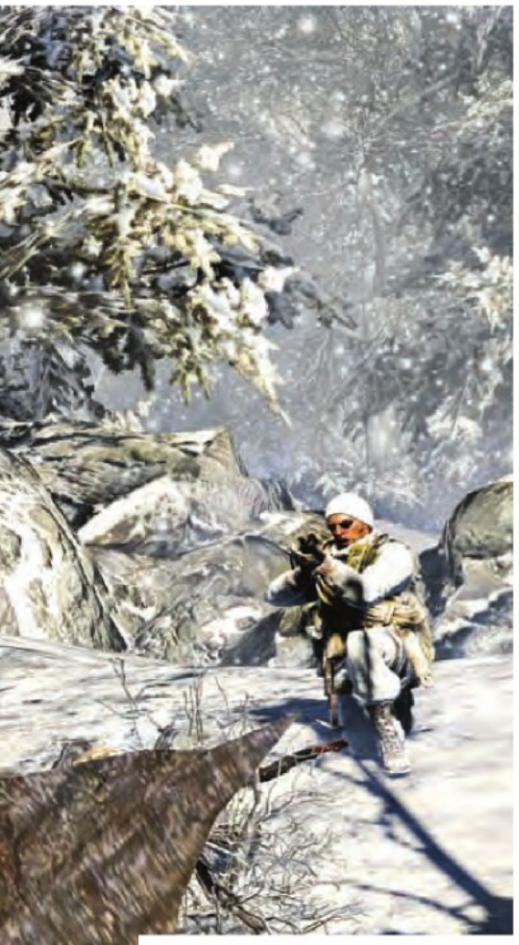
DV: The perfect Perk scenario is when the game comes out, I look at the data, and for every Perk tier, there's a generally even distribution of what Perks are being used. The trouble with Stopping Power is that it modifies the damage by [so much] that a lot of people thought they had to have Stopping Power to be competitive. If you use Stopping Power, in any one of those tiers, you're going to immediately see 40, 50, 60 per cent of people using it.

The new Theater mode tells us you must have spent a lot of time watching *Call Of Duty* videos on YouTube...

DV: We actually use these videos to learn about our own game, because for all the hours you play or billions of dollars you spend on QA your game will get played more frequently the first day the game is out than in the last year in testing.

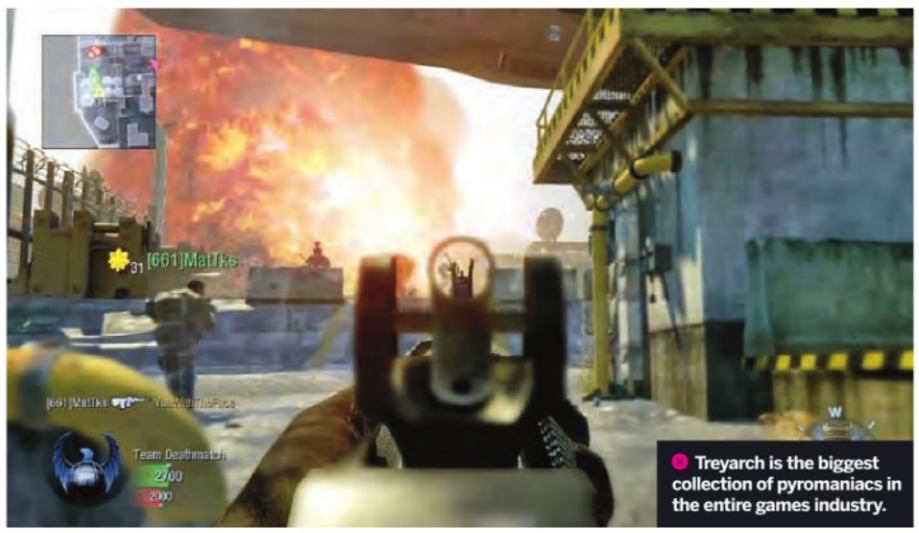
Do you think *Call Of Duty* has been unfairly labelled as being full of glitches and hacks?

Josh Olin: Everybody now thinks *MW2* is this glitchy game, but that's just the game people were playing when the mods became popular. So we are fortunate enough to have seen all this during *MW2*'s time, and were able to build better security

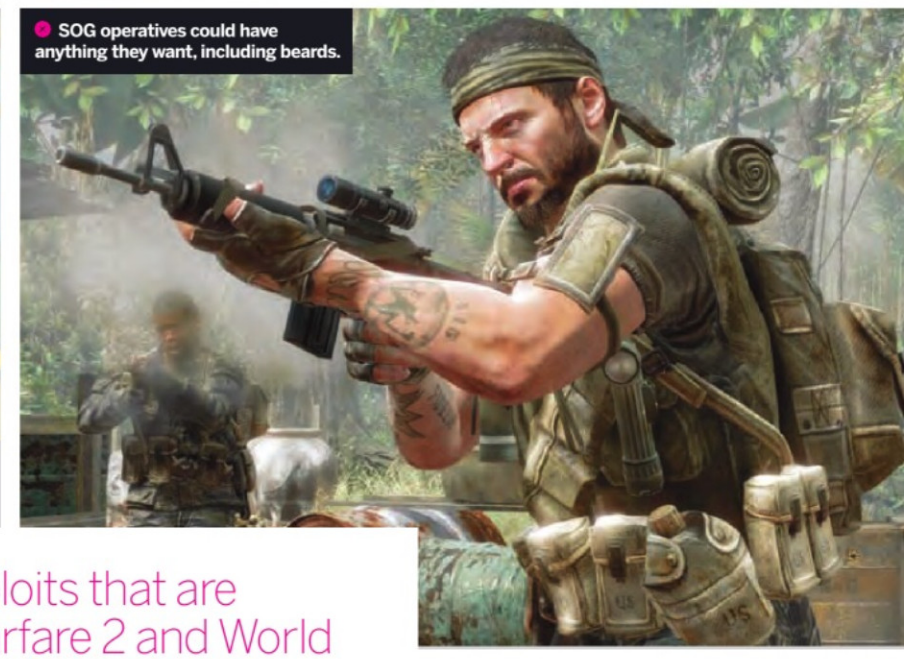




In just a few seconds, all this will be fire and explosions.



Treyarch is the biggest collection of pyromaniacs in the entire games industry.



SOG operatives could have anything they want, including beards.

measures into *Black Ops*. None of the current exploits that are prevalent in *Modern Warfare 2* and *World At War* to an extent, are going to work on *Black Ops*.

Why did you make all the Wager modes free-for-all only?

DV: *Call Of Duty* is really strong in team-based play. Free-for-all, not so popular. The problem is that you just kill people, there's not enough variety. All four of these are FFA elimination-based game modes – we made and then scrapped team-based versions entirely – where it's just you and the purity of your weapons' platforms and that's it. There's something really core about that, something down to the fundamentals of the game. The purity of these four game modes will get people excited.

> None of the current exploits that are prevalent in Modern Warfare 2 and World At War, are going to work on Black Ops

None more pure than One In The Chamber, which has us excited already. How did you come up with that?

DV: One In The Chamber was us asking how pure can we make the game, and the answer was having a pistol and one bullet. That's purity. You get one bullet, instant kill. If you kill someone you get a replacement bullet, if you knife a guy, you haven't used your bullet so you get two. This really amazing thing happened in playtesting: players would fake whether they had a bullet or not, mind games would start and tension would rise. This really insane dynamic would occur that was really pure, it results in screaming profanities, and when that happens, you know that we've really hit something great.

Call Of Duty: Black Ops is being developed by Treyarch. Check the website for more details: **www.treyarch.com**

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The Wager modes are brilliant, especially One In The Chamber.
- Theater mode provides players with the ultimate bragging tool.
- Smart decisions about what to remove as well as what to add.
- You can report cheating and boosting from within the game.

READ ME

The first *Call Of Duty* title to be set during the Cold War. A nice change of setting for the franchise. It's also the first *COD* to be developed by *all* of Treyarch's 200-odd staff.

CAN IT GET BETA?

Let the people decide

IF YOU'RE A fan of the *Call Of Duty* franchise then you're no doubt convinced that the best way to ensure its multiplayer is as good as can be is to let you have a go so you can give Treyarch some pointers, but you shouldn't get your hopes up too high for a public beta test.

"We know the values and merits of having a beta," explains Josh Olin. "But we also know the cons of having one. We know the fans want it, and if we do it you'll hear it first from me."



PREVIEW



Batman is looking better than ever in *Arkham City*.





You'll have a lot more enemies to fight at any one time.

THE CO-OP QUESTION

Will Batman have company in Arkham City?

BACK WHEN THIS sequel was only known as *Arkham Asylum 2* there was already talk that it would feature a co-op partner for Batman, allowing for multiplayer campaigning. The obvious choice would be Robin who, thanks to his acrobatic training, can easily keep up with Batman. However, with the introduction of Catwoman, some have speculated she might be playable. Clearly she's got what it takes to stand by the Dark Knight's side, but since she also gets herself into trouble we're not sure she'll be the co-op partner. That's if there is one at all. Rocksteady isn't being drawn on the subject.

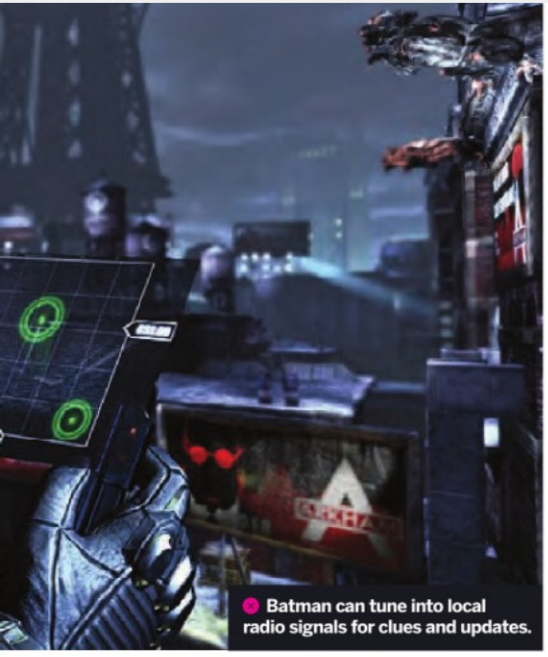




Harley Quinn is sporting a brand-new outfit for this sequel.



Two-Face is struggling to gain influence in this city of insanity.



Batman can tune into local radio signals for clues and updates.



FIRST LOOK





Can we expect some romance between Bats and Catwoman?



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2011

Batman: Arkham City

Where does he get those wonderful toys?

PS3

Gotham was never exactly known for its peaceful streets and mildly mannered citizens, but *Arkham City* seems to be taking things to extremes. With the crime and insanity of Batman's home requiring more than just an insane asylum and a prison, Rocksteady has come up with the perfect excuse to keep its sequel contained while still making it about four times bigger than *Arkham Asylum*.

But with great space comes great responsibility. The biggest challenge for *Arkham City*'s development team is finding a way to translate Batman's abilities and gameplay from the tight corridors and limited numbers of Arkham's old base to an urban landscape. That might seem like a simple move, but when you've built a game to be a certain way it can be hard to work up to an open-world game. That's what Rocksteady is aiming for and it appears to be achieving it by upping the stakes in every area of the game.

The most important improvements are to Batman himself who is greatly enhanced during the course of *Arkham City* on where he was by the end of the last game. As you begin this latest game you will have access to most of the tools Batman ended up with before, which means to keep things moving you'll be getting even more kit, even bigger upgrades and a whole new set of playgrounds to use them in.

As we revealed last issue, many of the biggest areas of expansion come from finding new ways to make use of the abilities and tools Batman already has. Using his zip-line, for instance, to create your own dynamic vantage points high above the thieves, murderers and malcontents of Arkham City below you. That means the ability to also create takedown locations and be far less restricted in how you take on enemies in the game.

Likewise, down on the ground the Caped Crusader will have plenty of new tricks up his cowl. With larger areas and free movement comes more enemies and even some complexity to the make-up of the thugs you see in the street. Detective vision gives you an insight into the affiliation of gang members, so if you're after a particular group you can target them specifically. You'll be wading through a lot more guys to do so this time around, too. To cope with this Batman will have two new sets of abilities to make use of.

> Batman will have a hell of a lot more attacks to perform

First, he'll have a hell of a lot more attacks to perform, including being able to handle more than one counterattack at any one time. Rocksteady has revealed there are around twice as many animations for Batman this time around so that gives you some idea of how many more attacks you're likely to be able to pull off. Second, you'll also be able to use gadgets like the Batarang in the middle of your fisticuffs, presumably so you can thin out your targets faster and more aggressively.

Apparently Rocksteady already has *Arkham City* to a point where it can be played from beginning to end, but since it has no intention of releasing it before next autumn it looks like it will be getting about a year's worth of testing and polishing time. Quite a while to spend tweaking a game, but since *Arkham Asylum* was a superbly tight and sleek experience that can only mean *Arkham City* is going to be even more extraordinary come its release.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Arkham breaks out into a fully explorable open world with lots of detail.
- Lots more side missions and stories to find and solve besides the main plot.
- Lots more gadgets and abilities to be added to Batman's arsenal.
- There's a very good chance that vehicles will be playing a part.

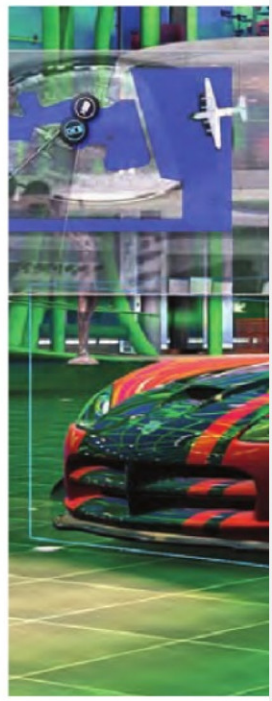
READ ME

With a grapple boost technique Batman can virtually fly around Arkham City by gliding and grappling from building to building.

Rocksteady Studios returns to take the helm of **Batman: Arkham City**. You can register for more info at **www.batmanarkhamcity.com**







The quality of *GT5*'s visuals are second to none, as you can see.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Gran Turismo 5

Still surprising us after all these years

PS3 It's hard to believe that after all these years of waiting for *Gran Turismo 5* that it can still catch us by surprise, but that's exactly what happened when Kazunori Yamauchi recently revealed a whole bunch of new features for his most-anticipated game to date. Quite apart from being one of the most stunning-looking games ever made, *GT5* has an RPG mode, track creator and karts. So much for not being able to teach an old dog new tricks.

The RPG mode is actually called B-Spec (with the main racing modes under the A-Spec banner) and had been planned since *Gran Turismo 3*. Yamauchi wasn't able to complete it back then, but now he can include his vision of a *Gran Turismo* RPG on the disc with *GT5*. In B-Spec you will play through the game as a race team director as you recruit drivers, enter competitions and then get your guys ready for the race.

You will be able to build up to six drivers through the game, each of whom you'll be able to motivate and command during a race, but you can't control them directly. Instead you need to train them, improve their experience and manage them correctly to get the wins. The greatest challenge will be the 24-hour races in which you'll need four drivers as you pit your wits against the elements, fatigue and, of course, your opposition. It looks like a fantastic new mode that turns *Gran Turismo* on its head and proves yet again that *Gran Turismo 5* could make all other simulation racers obsolete.

The track creator is another new feature confirmed and demoed for the first time recently. Rather than giving you full course editing you can set parameters for a course and it is generated for you, making sure it is driveable. If you ever used the Auto Complete option in *ModNation Racers* then it's a little like that. Once it has been made you can change how the course is divided up and then edit each section by adding more corners or the difficulty of those corners. All your creations can of course be shared online for others to race.

And then there were the karts, rumoured for some time and seemingly leaked not long ago. Yamauchi revealed he had actually planned on holding the karts off until *GT6*, but since they got leaked he decided to include them this year instead. The idea behind them is to allow newcomers to throw a car about without having to be too knowledgeable about driving or *Gran Turismo* in general. Karts should be a great way for players to get into the game and learn the ropes or just let off some steam in a nice casual environment.

THE RACE THAT NEVER WAS

GT5 re-creates classic Seventies racing legends

SOMETHING KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI seemed very proud of at gamescom was that he got three Seventies racing cars into the game. He revealed that the Ferrari 330 P4 (one of his favourite cars) would appear alongside its bitter racing rival the Ford Mark IV. *GT5* will also feature the Jaguar XJ13, built to take on the Ford and Ferrari, but ultimately cancelled. Polyphony has re-created it based on the original design so you can race it against these classic cars yourself. It's thrown in the prototype Lamborghini Miura P400 Bertone, also from this era, for good measure.





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME

- B-Spec is a whole new way to play *Gran Turismo*, never seen before in this series.
- Simply the most graphically impressive game ever made for any console.
- The largest selection of cars with the most detail we've ever seen from a racing game.
- Truly, *GT5* is shaping up to be the definitive racer of this generation.



All the usual car views are there during a race.



GT5 isn't all about the high-end sports cars and uber-vehicles.



Photo mode works in 3D for some amazing car shots.


Karts are a new addition for *GT5* designed specifically for beginners.

And like everything else in the game, all of these modes and features are presented in the highest quality visuals we've ever seen. Some of the detail in the cars and tracks as well as the superb physics make *GT5* something to behold. The B-Spec mode is a great place to take that all in, too, as you watch the cars go around the course in real-time, switching camera angles whenever you like. And the loading times? Whatever you may have heard elsewhere, there was no trouble there either. Nothing seemed to take longer than about 30 seconds to load at any given time and that's with a game that's still in development. Come launch we would expect even those to have been trimmed down.

Polyphony Digital continues to develop the **Gran Turismo** series. Check out the official website at **www.gran-turismo.com**

READ ME

The A-Spec half of *Gran Turismo 5* is referred to as the Real Driving Sim, while B-Spec is called the Racing Sim RPG. They're also referred to as Red and Blue modes.



This is one way of displaying info in B-Spec mode.

PREVIEW

UPDATE



The same rules still apply – always aim for the yellow bits.

RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 2011

Dead Space 2

Watch this space

PS3

Visceral Games has been showing off one of the main features that makes *Dead Space 2* different from its predecessor, namely, and perhaps ironically, space. There was a lot of death in *Dead Space*, but not very much space. It was mostly tight, dark, claustrophobic corridors, which were very effective in generating tension and scares, but Visceral is keen to inject a lot more variety into the follow-up so this time you can go outside into the endless void of space, and it doesn't get any more wide open than that.

Most of the game takes place inside The Sprawl, a huge city-like space station, but occasionally you'll have to go outside. For example, at one point you'll need to manually align The Sprawl's solar array in order to restore power to the station. In order to reach the controls, you have to use the boosters on Isaac's new rig. Tempting as it might be to take advantage of this new-found freedom of movement, you still have a limited air supply so the open space, while effective, is essentially an illusion. The tight time limit enforced by the lack of air will demand deft movement control, taking Isaac's floaty inertia into account. It looks kinda fun, although not exactly exciting and certainly not very scary.

But then, as a demonstration of how the pace of *Dead Space 2* can dramatically and suddenly shift, Isaac jettisons himself from one end of the vast station to the other and the next section is a high-speed game of dodging and swerving around and through various chunks of space debris. Isaac makes it just in time, crashing through some sort of service tunnel and just about landing on his feet. We were a little disappointed not to see him get ripped apart by something at any point, but you can't have everything, can you?

> We were a little disappointed not to see him get ripped apart

Dead Space 2 is being developed by Visceral Games. Check the website for more details: **www.visceralgames.com**



This shot gives you an idea of how big The Sprawl is.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- You can fly without the aid of a ship. Wheeeee!
- Wide-open spaces will scare the crap out of agoraphobics.
- Isaac doesn't sound like Joe Pasquale, which is a relief.
- More varied action and pacing than the first *Dead Space*.

READ ME

Sequel to the super-scary action-horror title from Visceral. This time Isaac floats about in zero gravity and sometimes he even talks.

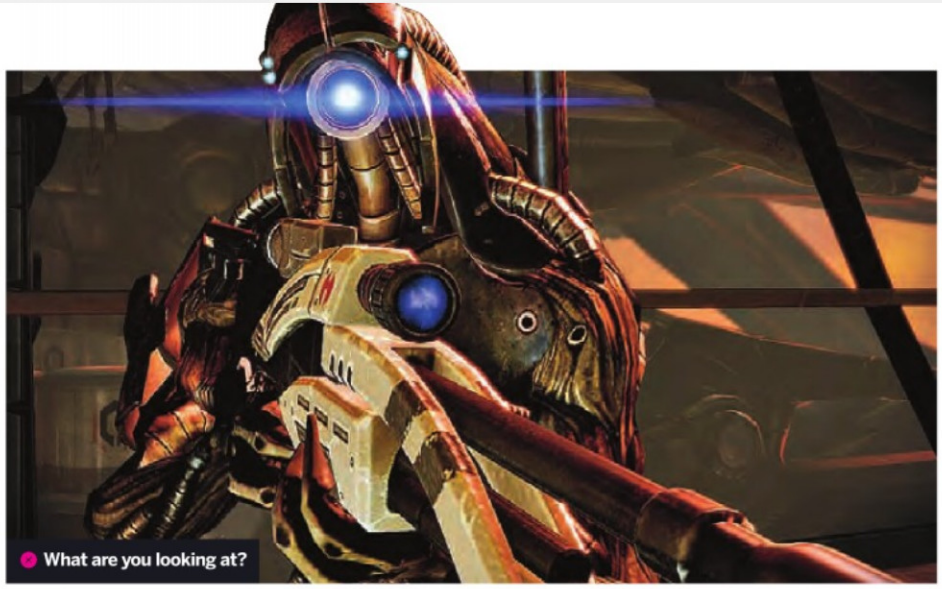


TERRIBLE TWOS

What is it with Visceral Games and babies?

DEAD SPACE 2 and *Dante's Inferno* were made by two different teams at the same studio, but it's clear that there's been a bit of cross-pollination. Both games have scary enemies that look like very young children. In *Dante's Inferno* it was upright babies with blades for arms, and in *Dead Space 2* it's these long-fingered toddlers with a load of bleurgh where their mouths should be. Personally, we find normal children frightening enough...

www.imagineshop.co.uk



What are you looking at?



Overkill: fine when it's against a robot.



Great action mixed with juicy RPG goodness. Yum.

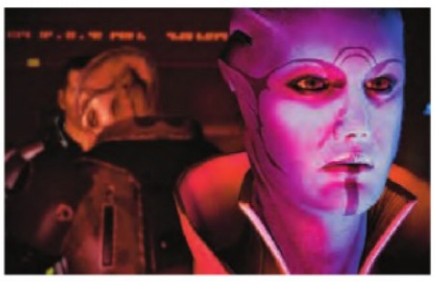


Martin Sheen, aka The Illusive Man.





Garrus is well nails, like.



RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 2011

Mass Effect 2

Don't believe the hype. No, wait... actually... do

PS3

We have been confident for a long time that the *Mass Effect* series would eventually make its way to PlayStation, and have actually gone so far as to put in writing that a trilogy pack would be announced for PS3 by the end of this year. Okay, so we were a mite off with that particular prediction, but we were at least 33 per cent right – not to be sniffed at. For you see, *Mass Effect 2* is indeed coming to Sony's console at the beginning of 2011.

For the three or four of you who haven't heard, *Mass Effect 2* is an RPG in a space opera setting. Players take control of their created Commander Shepard as they bring together a team of reprobates, mercenaries, dodgy blokes and ladies with nice bottoms to take on a threat to the universe itself. This is only a preview, but we've played the game to death here at **Play** (which did mean turning on our 360s, sorry) and it's safe to say the game is absolutely brilliant.

> It's safe to say the game is absolutely brilliant

Hopefully BioWare will have its development hat sitting neatly on its head for the PS3 version, as the *only* thing threatening the quality of the game is the minuscule chance the port won't be handled with the greatest of care.

We're not going to see the original game over on these PS3-flavoured shores, unfortunately. This is undeniably a disappointing development. But don't get too caught up in your sadness, as the simple fact of the matter is that *Mass Effect 2* is one of the best games around. The fact PS3 owners who haven't played it before will no longer have any excuse for avoiding it is one of the absolute best of the Very Good Things we often talk about. This will be huge.

Mass Effect 2 is being developed by BioWare. Check out **www.masseffect.bioware.com** for more details.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Jumping straight in at the middle

GAMERS NEW TO *Mass Effect 2* may feel they're missing out by not getting the original game and its story. BioWare is combating this by putting an introductory segment into the game which will offer a "seamless introduction" to the game's world. We don't know if this means a montage or a playable section, yet.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Mass Effect 2*. Sequel to the exceptional *Mass Effect*.
- Honestly, that's about all you need to know. Trust us and stick it on your wish list.
- *Mass Effect 2* is genuinely brilliant. We've just got our fingers crossed for the PS3 port.
- Why are you still demanding reasons? We've made our stance clear.

READ ME

The original *Mass Effect* was published by Microsoft Game Studios, which is why – we're assuming – it will never come to PS3. Sad times.



The Miz is about to cry 'AWEEEESOMMME!' when he jumps.



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER


Hell In A Cell is another area that has seen huge improvements.


Bret Hart! Bret Hart! Bret! Hart! BRET HART!



Sheamus is as pasty as you would hope in-game.

WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011

Now with added Universes and Moments

PS3 We've talked about the latest iteration of *SmackDown Vs Raw* in recent months, so you may already know about the improvements to weapon physics. But just to quickly reiterate: there's a brand-new physics engine on weapons/items. They can now be balanced on ropes, react in more lifelike ways to contact with wrasslers and tables break differently every time. It's a simple addition that means you can experiment more with how you attack opponents. While it isn't the biggest new feature you'd expect to see in a game, it at least offers a few new avenues of play for those interested in the series.

But following a trip to once again get our hands on the game, we were let in on a few new additions to the *2011* edition that we didn't know about before. Probably the biggest new addition to the list is WWE Universe mode: a new take on the season/career mode that doesn't exist as a separate menu option, this mode – which can be toggled on or off – pays constant attention to the exhibition matches you are having in the game. After each, it correlates data of who fought who, the match types, championship holders and lots of other variables to come up with a dynamic card on a generated full-year calendar of WWE events. For example, you pit John Cena against, say, Dolph Ziggler a few times and the game will automatically recognise this as a feud, and automatically set up future matches between the two in upcoming Raws, SmackDowns or PPVs. You can still customise the calendar if you want, and as mentioned you can just turn WWE Universe completely off so none of it is mandatory. It also means different entrances, cut-scenes and endings to matches will play out depending on relationships. For example, if Randy Orton and R-Truth are enemies there might be a situation after a match where Orton continues beating up Truth with a chair, or other similar, bad guy outcomes. Yuke's have tried to make an intuitive, non-obtrusive career mode, basically.

Road To WrestleMania returns, though, for those who don't like the sound of WWE Universe mode. This time it's a strange hybrid of exploration and RPG elements in the backstage area. You control your character – from a selection of a few, just like before – from a third-person perspective and can explore all around, running into wrestlers and officials as you go. You can train, watch TV, initiate brawls with any wrestler you encounter, follow branching paths in the story (one example was simply punch or don't punch) and you can get involved with mini-games and side missions (rescuing a man who is about to fall from a ledge by getting his ladder back, for example). An earlier game in the *SmackDown* series – *Here Comes The Pain* – had a similar backstage hub, but this time around it looks to really take

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The *SmackDown Vs Raw* series has never been a letdown in the fun stakes.
- The new WWE Universe mode could work in a wonderfully organic fashion.
- The new RPG-like elements to Road To WrestleMania sound interesting.
- As in previous games, creation modes make their return, and are always hilarious.





They get shinier every year.

advantage of all that scenario offers. Plus you can powerbomb Christian into a locker if he looks at you funny. Always a good thing.

Aside from the new weapon physics there was one change of note pointed out to us – Hell In A Cell has been modified slightly so there is more room between the ring and the inside of the cage, more moves to do against the cage and more opportunities to get weapons from under the ring. Even the biggest of fans has to admit that's not exactly earth-shattering news, even if it is entirely welcome – HIAC has been the same for about ten years now.

Creation modes return, with everything from last year's effort present. There haven't been any wholesale changes to any of these modes, but there have been changes under the hood on the smaller side of things. This year's game has the tagline 'This Is Your Moment' – something we would normally ignore, as it's marketing nonsense, but it is something that emphasises just how much Yuke's is basing around creation this year. Though admittedly it put a lot on creation last year. And the year before...

All in all, *SVR 2011* looks to be a more interesting package than we initially gave it credit for. The main game still hasn't changed a lot, but the window dressing might prove to be enough to keep us playing this year – something last year's game failed to do. There's always the chance for fan burnout with a yearly series (say hello, *Tiger Woods* games) and backlash to the online token situation (see 'Per-Per Play' boxout) could be brutal. But there is always fun to be had with *SmackDown* games, and we look forward to getting our hands on this one for a lengthy playthrough.

WWE SVR 2011 is being developed by Yuke's. Check out **www.smackdownvsraw.com** for more information on the game.

READ ME

***WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011* is actually the 12th entry to the ever-popular *SmackDown* series, and not the 2,011th, like you may have, understandably, assumed.**



Flying woman punch!



PER-PER PLAY

Cory Ledesma, creative director, THQ

Could you outline the plans for the online token system?
This year new game buyers will get a single-use token that appears on the back of the manual, they can enter that token and they will get the first DLC pack free... That and you unlock the online features set. Used game buyers will have two options – either they can purchase a single-use token – the price is $10 for PS3 – with that they'll get the DLC pack for free and online features set. Now, if they want to try out the online experience there is a seven-day trial period. However they will not get the bonus DLC unless they purchase the token.

Do you think there could be a fan backlash?
I'm not sure. I don't think we really care if used game buyers are upset, because new game buyers get everything. If used game buyers are upset that they don't get the online features I don't have much sympathy. It's a bit blunt, but I hope we don't upset people and I hope people understand that when a game is bought used we get cheated and I don't think anyone wants that.



PREVIEW

MULTIPLAYER







The best way to stop one of these is to snipe the driver.

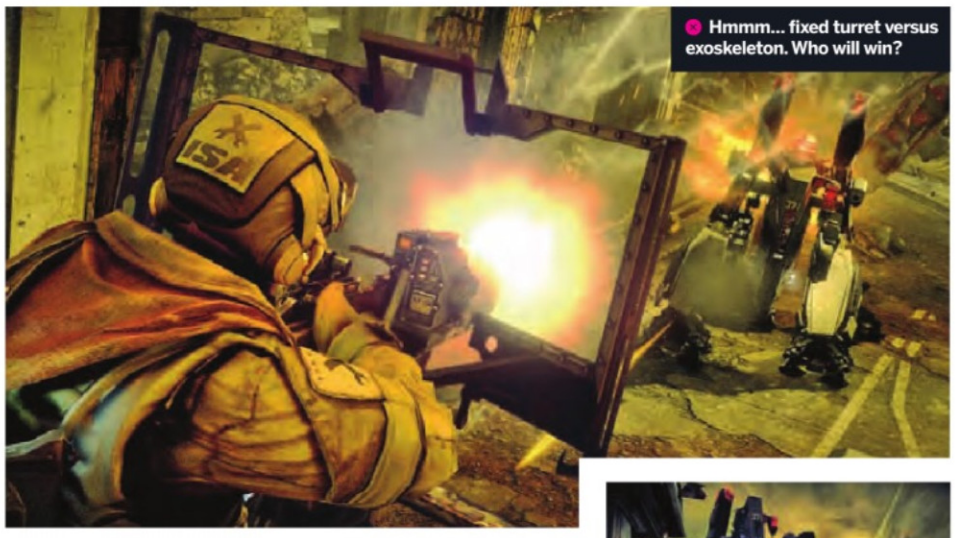
RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Killzone 3

We're back in the zone again







Hmmm... fixed turret versus exoskeleton. Who will win?



The new brutal melee attacks are present and correct in multiplayer.





VEHI-KILLZONE

Exoskeletons. Jetpacks. Segways?

VEHICLES IN ONLINE shooters can cause problems with balancing, just as they did in *Call Of Duty 3* and *Call Of Duty: World At War*, but the vehicles we've seen so far in *Killzone 3* – the exoskeleton walker and the jetpack – have a smart way of addressing that problem. The pilot is not protected in either of them and can be killed without destroying the vehicle. So while you're more powerful or more mobile in a vehicle, you might also be more vulnerable.

PS3

One of very few games capable of putting a dent, albeit a largely temporary one, in *Call Of Duty*'s almost total dominance of multiplayer over the PlayStation Network is *Killzone 3*. Its predecessor managed to pull us away from *COD* for several months, and this time out we reckon it might have what it takes to last even longer than that.

The main reasons *Killzone 2* online stopped being so compelling after a while were a general lack of variety and the infrequency of unlocks as you progressed through its meagre 15 experience levels. This is why Guerrilla has very sensibly increased the number of XP levels to 45, ramped up the number of unlockables accordingly and come up with a couple of new game modes to boot.

Those unlockables, by the way, don't include any career classes. All five of those will be available from the start so you don't need to play for dozens of hours before you start specialising. The bulk of the unlockables will be the six weapons and six special abilities attributed to each class. We assume there'll be some overlap, especially with the weapons, but that's still a lot more variety and content than we had in *Killzone 2*.

Guerrilla has discussed a couple of new abilities for the Medic class, namely the Minidrone – a small bot that solves the problem of who's supposed to heal Medics by doing just that – and Survive Bleed Out, which allows him to respawn exactly where he died.

On top of the improved career development features, there are now vehicles in each map – only exoskeleton walker and jetpack seen so far – and a story-based multiplayer mode called Operations, which sounds similar to the way *Brink* is set up, in that it's all very objective-driven and events during the match are bookended by cut-scenes featuring the character models of players who are performing well. Yeah, we'll definitely be able to live without *COD* for a while.

Killzone 3 is being developed by Guerrilla Games. Check the website for more details: **www.guerrilla-games.com**

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Features an intriguing story-based game mode – Operations.
- You can choose your career class from the beginning.
- Loads more rewards and unlockables to earn for yourself and your clan.
- 3D and Move are both fully functional in multiplayer mode.

READ ME

The third (or fourth if you also include *Liberation*) game in the *Killzone* series, boasting separate story modes for both the single-player and multiplayer.





FAQ

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

LittleBigPlanet 2

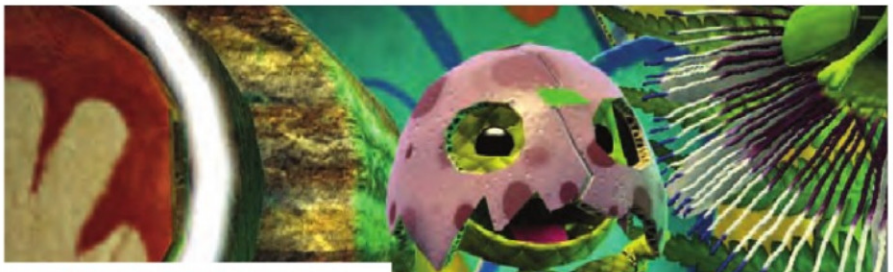
Are in not sequence words these



This giant robotic turkey features in the Story mode. It is hell-bent on destruction.



In-game Sackbots playing in-game games in-game.





PS3 **So, all that stuff we know about *LittleBigPlanet 2*... that's not it? There's more?**
Yes. Media Molecule recently revealed voice sampling and the sequencer tool.

Voice sampling? What can I use to record my voice?
A Bluetooth headset or the microphone on a PlayStation Eye will do the trick.

Is the sequencer for making music?
It was originally designed for music and can be used to make it, yes. But it's actually more powerful than that.

Really? How?
It can be used to sequence anything in the game. We already knew that before we typed it, but seeing it in black and white has made us go all dizzy again...

Um... explain.
We'll try. Erm... pretty much anything that can be triggered can be triggered as part of a sequence set up using the sequencer. So instead of sequences of beats and riffs a sequence can be made up of sequences of things happening.

Head hurting. Gimme an example...
Okay, so there's a scrolling section in the Story mode where it looks like you're travelling along a track. You're not, though; it's actually the track that's moving. The camera is staying still and you can only move within the confines of the screen. The sequencer is used to make each section of the track appear just off the top of the screen, move down through the screen, then disappear when it's gone off the bottom. So the track can actually be much longer than the length (or height, technically) of the level itself.

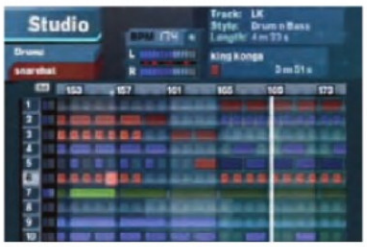
I'm going to say yes, so that you stop...
It sounds complicated and can be used in very complex ways, but it's actually very simple to use and is designed to streamline and simplify the creation process. The sequence doesn't actually *do* anything much that can't be done in other ways, it just makes it easier by bringing loads of elements of the creation tools together into one system.

I get it. I think.
Even if you don't, it doesn't matter. What matters is that thousands of *LittleBigPlanet* fans *will* get it and will do millions of incredible things with it for the rest of us to enjoy at no extra cost. Oh, we so can't wait.

LittleBigPlanet 2 is being developed by Media Molecule. Check the website for more details: **www.mediamolecule.com**

SEQUENCING DNA

How does a sequencer work?



THIS SCREEN ISN'T from *LBP 2*, it's from *MTV Music Generator 3*, but the *LBP 2* sequencer works in a similar way. You place actions on the tracks of the sequence as if they're beats or riffs and the whole thing plays out when the sequence is triggered. It'll make sense when you try it for yourself.

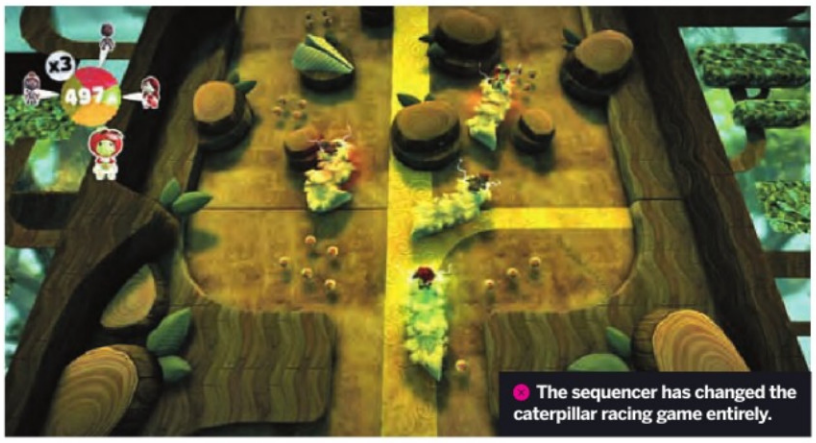


WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- They just keep on adding to it – it's almost too much to bear.
- Might represent a real revolution in gaming, art and expression.
- You can even use it to make Sackboy swear.
- Offers astonishingly good value for money.

READ ME

Since adapting the sequencer tool for use with anything in the game, Media Molecule has used it to redo all of the story mode cut-scenes. It's that good!



The sequencer has changed the caterpillar racing game entirely.

PREVIEW



This is the Ravager. You may want to throw cars at him.



UPDATE

The graphic novel-style cut-scenes make a return.



BOSH.



Zapping remains, and zapping remains fun.



Whizzing around is sure to be just as much fun as before.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

inFamous 2

Taking you out of your comfort zone is a shocker

PS3

Flinging his way through the city, Cole MacGrath grinds power lines, floats through the air with his mega-electric hands and unleashes car-flinging death on all those who oppose him. In the city he is in his element, and in the city he is able to take advantage of many of the things it offers him. But then Cole arrives at a swamp. And things get a bit more difficult from there.

Taking Cole – and players – out of comfort zones is something Sucker Punch is aiming for with *inFamous 2*. Battling a militia or the enemies known as the Corrupted is fine – we can deal with that. Giving him a new weapon, the tuning fork-like Amp – we can deal with *that*. Giving Cole new electrical powers – of *course* we can deal with that. But putting him in an area with less rail tracks to grind? Less cars to fling? More water to electro-drown in? That's something a bit harder to deal with.

> Cole arrives at a swamp and things get a bit more difficult

Cole's powers are less effective in these swamp regions of New Marais, though electricity versus wooden structures = the chance for hilarious destruction. And with the likes of the Ionic Vortex – the tornadoey power – and the newly revealed power of Kinetic Pulse – allowing you to lob cars and other objects, rather than just push them – means you're certainly not going to be useless in the bayou. Plus the ability to toss cars at the Ravager is something that will definitely come in handy.

We've come away quite impressed with *inFamous 2*. While right now we haven't seen enough to truly blow us away, we are hopeful for future announcements – and those who liked the first will definitely like the sequel, playing similarly as it does to the original.

inFamous 2 is being developed by Sucker Punch. Check out **www.infamousthegame.com** for more details.



Makes a change from the gun-toting hoodies of the original.



LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING

The many faces of Cole MacGrath

WE THOUGHT THE old Cole was gone. But then the internet kicked up a stink – about ten people moaned and this myth that the public hated new Cole was perpetuated. Sucker Punch went back on its initially revealed design, instead giving us a Cole who looks more like his original self. It's not a travesty. It's annoying.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Being an electric-hurling superhero is still a lot of fun.
- The melee combat may be simple, but it plays out well.
- Graphically this is a big step-up from the original *inFamous*.
- We expect more announcements to follow, so keep your eyes/ears peeled.

READ ME

Do you like being a morally ambiguous electric-wielding superhero who glides through cities and swamps? Well you should like *inFamous 2* then.



We'd bet this guy isn't a goody. Or is he? OR IS HE?

UPDATE



Boss characters should be the only ones you *have* to kill.



Bournemouth has changed a fair bit by 2027.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

The future is sterile, and so are you

PS3

Square Enix revealed the first trailer of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* that actually had in-game footage in it and... well, it looked as good as the stuff we've seen before. As in, this game still looks really pretty with an interesting and individual style – compared to other games – that helps it to stand out from the crowd.

We're still waiting on our chance to actually play the game, though, and this is unsurprisingly why we're holding off on any pre-judgement for the time being. What we've seen and what we've been shown has all pointed to *Human Revolution* being rather spiffy indeed, but you can never be sure with these things. Cautious optimism it is, then.

We have actually learned some real information, though, which may come as a surprise. Lead character Adam Jensen is a mechanically augmented chap, and as such can be upgraded. We've been informed about things like the 'bungie' aug, that helps players descend from a height safely and land silently. Then there's the 'claymore', which sends out explosives in a 360-degree radius for those who think stealth is overrated and pointless. But for those who do still appreciate subtlety there are augs like a cloaking device and x-ray vision, which is ideal for knowing where your enemies are at all times. And then punching them through the wall.

> We're looking forward to Human Revolution a great deal

We're erring largely on the side of looking forward to *Human Revolution* a great deal. Nothing we've seen so far – bar some minor complaints about regenerating health – has really made us think it will do anything but be a good entry to the *Deus Ex* series. There's a small chance we'll be wrong, obviously, but time will tell. Also we're often right.

Deus Ex: Human Revolution is being developed by Eidos Montreal. Check out **www.deusex.com** for more details.



Future fashion: stupid.



D[EUS EX]NA

Developer research techniques

THERE ARE WORRIES Eidos Montreal might miss the feel of the original *Deus Ex* – that which made it such a stunning game. But the team are sensitive to these concerns and have sought to allay such fears by carefully playing the original and understanding "the DNA of the franchise". Which sounds quite nice to us, truth be told.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- We're still getting more excited the more we hear about it.
- It has a rather arresting visual style.
- The in-game trailer reminded us what makes *Deus Ex* different.
- The wait is down to just a few months.

READ ME

Elias Toufexis voices Adam Jensen. According to a popular online encyclopedia, he was voted sixth best actor from Montreal in 2009. By the *Montreal Mirror*.

FIRST LOOK



These Sky-Line trains are the main form of transportation around Columbia.





RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

BioShock: Infinite

It's hard to keep your feet on the ground

PS3

The announcement of *BioShock: Infinite* was a rare thing in today's games industry – a surprise. It was surprising first because the announcement came barely six months after the release of *BioShock 2*, second, because most people assumed Irrational had moved on from the *BioShock* series and, third, because it's not set in Rapture or underwater at all.

So, our first question was: is this *really* a *BioShock* game at all? Does it simply carry the name as the result of a compromise between two sides of the business? Did Mr Marketing tell Mr Development, 'Alright, you can make whatever kind of game you want, but we're still calling it *BioShock* because the brand sells'?

We're certainly sure the sales and money-driven types at 2K Games would have been keen to keep the name but Irrational's creative director Ken Levine insists that *Infinite* is a *BioShock* game at its creative core, too. Irrational was all done with Rapture, which is why a different studio handled *BioShock 2*, but felt the defining principles of *BioShock* – that it's an FPS set in a fantastical environment with a story that draws in real history – could be taken elsewhere.

That 'elsewhere' is Columbia, a city floating in the sky. Like Rapture, it's based on ideas of what people genuinely thought might soon be possible at a certain time in history. In Infinite's case that period is the early 20th Century – the game is set in 1912 – a time when technology was accelerating at an incredible pace. The first flying machines had just been built, America was emerging as a global power and optimism was so high that anything seemed possible.

Despite the name, don't expect to see that many familiar ideas and features in *BioShock: Infinite*. It's already looking very much its own game with another unique, original setting and, we're promised, fresh new game mechanics to go with it. So would you kindly get excited.

BioShock: Infinite is being developed by Irrational Games. Check the website for more details: **www.irrationalgames.com**

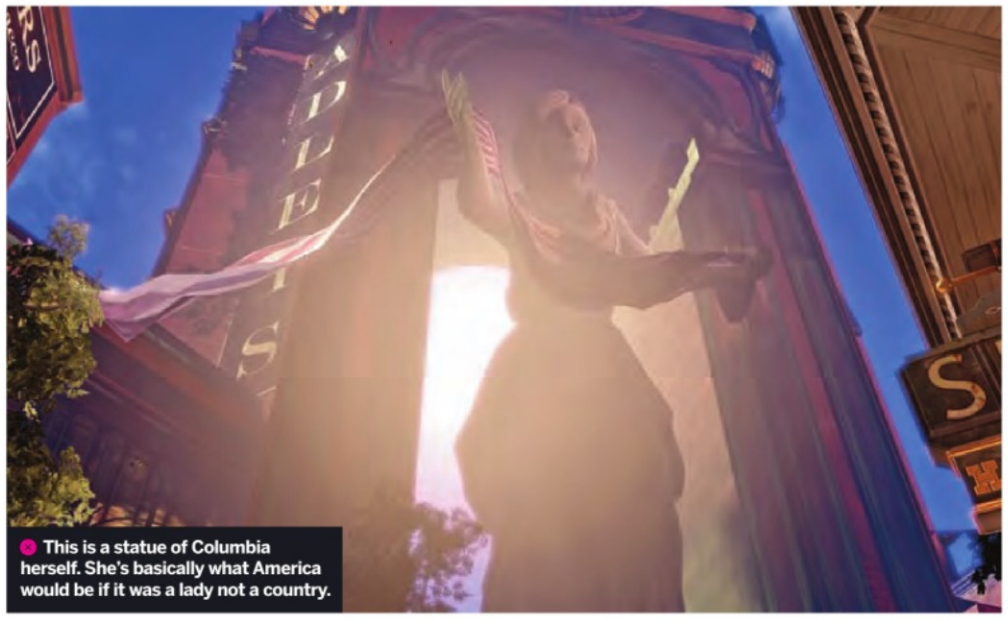

Social commentary will be a key theme as always, this time focusing much more on America.



ARE YOU MY DADDY?

In the past, there will be robots

SEE THAT HAND? It does not belong to a Big Daddy. There are no Big Daddies or Little Sisters in *BioShock: Infinite*. This thing is large, armoured, aggressive and humanoid like a Big Daddy, but look carefully at that hand – that's not a glove, is it? There's not a person in there – this thing is an automaton of some sort.


This is a statue of Columbia herself. She's basically what America would be if it was a lady not a country.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A new and exciting setting for *BioShock*.
- The city of Columbia is even more striking to look at than Rapture.
- The franchise is back in the hands of its creators.
- There'll be proper face-to-face interaction with characters this time.

READ ME

A new direction for *BioShock*, namely up, sees the franchise shift from the depths and take to the skies in a huge floating city.

www.imagineshop.co.uk



Most parts of the maps are much brighter and sharper than this.

RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2011

Crysis 2

"They're flanking us on 5th and Broadway!"

PS3

We've previously reported on just how gorgeously cinematic *Crysis 2*'s single-player story mode is looking, and it is, but now it's time to talk multiplayer. It's not as cinematic as the story mode and a little less gorgeous, but cor blimey it's fun. Long-time fans of David Doak and his Free Radical/Crytek UK team might be hoping that, in the continued absence of a *TimeSplitters 4* announcement, *Crysis 2* might be the next best thing. Well, it's not exactly *TimeSplitters*, but there are hints of the classic PS2 FPS series for sure. The action is frantic, tight and relentless, taking place across compact, cleverly designed maps.

There are nods to the *Call Of Duty* formula, just as there are in most online shooters these days. You earn experience points for kills, for certain actions that help your team's cause and for match results, and these go towards levelling you up through 80 player ranks. Along the way you'll unlock a range of futuristic equipment including 60 Nanosuit upgrades, which grant you a huge range of superhuman skills and powers that can be mixed and matched to suit your playing style. Some of these upgrades are subtle stat tweaks, while others make a huge difference to the way you play. This kind of stuff gives *Crysis 2* a feel more akin to the classic online FPS rivals *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*. It's pacey and anarchic, but there's still a lot of scope for tactics and teamwork.

There are six game modes, two of which have so far been revealed. Both have names designed to suggest they're not the same as modes we've seen in other games – Team Instant Action and Crash Site – but we assure you they are team deathmatch and king of the hill respectively. Nothing wrong with that, though. As the saying goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. But, if possible, do give it a fancy new name.

Crysis 2 is being developed by Crytek. Check the website for more details: **www.crytek.com**



C.E.L.L. soldiers belong to a special unit commissioned by Crynet.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Causes nostalgic *TimeSplitters* flushes.
- Loads of wildly different customisation options.
- Frantic, non-stop shooting action. No time to relax.
- It has a variety of powerful melee attacks to try out.

READ ME

Sequel to the super-sexy-looking PC FPS, now with multiplayer developed by the *TimeSplitters* creators at Crytek UK.



Crash Site is all about defending pods that fall out of the sky (and not getting crushed under them).

EMOTIONAL IMPACT

The roof, the roof, the roof is under heavy fire

THE TWO MAPS revealed so far are Impact and Rooftop Gardens. Impact is set in the ruins of two collapsed buildings, while Rooftop Gardens is set in some gardens on the roof of a building that's still standing. Both are well designed, with environmental features to suit all play styles.





PREVIEW

FIRST LOOK



The Audi quattro is one of the iconic cars of the fastest, most dangerous rally class ever – Group B.



The Ego engine's lighting techniques have been tweaked for even better results.



The weather in the game is dynamic. Developers love saying 'dynamic'.



The Morris Cooper is one of the loveable old classic models.

RELEASE DATE: TBA 2011

DiRT 3

No such thing as a clean lap in this one

PS3

We have to admit that, much as we're looking forward to it, we greeted the announcement of *DiRT 3* with a touch of sadness. Why? Because it was *not* the announcement of *Colin McRae: DiRT 3*. Yes, even for the European market, the Colin McRae name has now been dropped.

With both *DiRT* and *DiRT 2*, Codemasters made deliberate efforts to appeal to an American audience by shifting the focus away from rally driving as we know it in Europe and towards the kind of off-road events Americans are familiar with. Some of the stars of off-road driving in the US were also brought in and, in *DiRT 2*, the whole career mode was turned into what Codemasters has now admitted was a "teenager's" idea of what life must be like for a rally driver. While Codies has no regrets about introducing US-style racing – the increased variety has improved the game and as a marketing strategy it's worked – it's promised *DiRT 3* will be "flying the flag" of the UK's leading videogame publisher a bit more. This time, we're promised, the balance will be spot-on, and *DiRT 3* will be a racing experience with a truly international feel.

But at the same time, Codemasters knows when it's onto a good thing and American rally/stunt driver Ken Block's role in proceedings will be increased, most conspicuously with the new Gymkhana mode. These events take place on large, open playgrounds and work like a cross between *Skate* and *Stuntman*, with drivers earning points by performing tricks, stunts, jumps and drifts. If you saw Ken Block filling James May with terror driving around an airfield on *Top Gear*, then you'll have an idea of what to expect. Only when you do it, you'll crash. At least the first few times.

So yes, there'll be plenty of 'Xtreme' American stuff, but those who enjoy belting along the winding, country roads of some of the world's most spectacular locations will be well catered for, too. In all there will be 100 routes (*DiRT 2* had 41) spanning territories such as Kenya, Finland, Norway, Monte Carlo and Aspen and all, as usual, will require distinctly different styles of driving to master.

There'll be over 50 cars in all spanning all five decades of rally driving history. Classes to feature include WRC, Open Class, Super 2000, Group B, Super Buggies, RAID, Rallycross and Trailblazer, so you really are getting the most diverse off-road driving game ever. And it also promises to look better and handle better than ever before. We can't imagine the tweaks to physics and graphics will be that noticeable because we didn't really see *that* much room for improvement in *DiRT 3*.

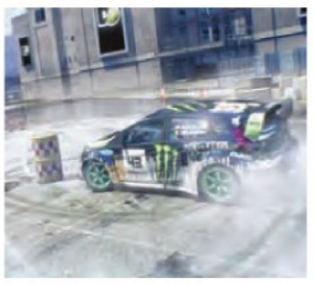
Finally, the multiplayer and online aspects will have loads more modes and options thrown in, such as Transporter, Goldrush, Outbreak and Cat 'n' Mouse, split-screen support and the opportunity to edit your replays and upload them to YouTube. Codemasters has hinted that *DiRT 3* might be the last title to bear the *DiRT* name, calling the series a 'trilogy' and it looks like the brand is gearing up to go out with a bang before presumably evolving into something else in the future.

DiRT 3 is being developed by Codemasters. Check the website for more details: **www.codemasters.co.uk**



The Ford Escort Mark II might look a bit rubbish, but it was a dominant force in late-Seventies rally racing.





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The biggest and best off-road driving game of all time.
- The extreme teenage American dude stuff has been toned down.
- There are many more ways to play multiplayer than in previous games.
- It's just a great racing series, full stop. We're looking forward to it.

READ ME

Third and possibly final part of the *DiRT* 'trilogy', with more cars, tracks, modes and slightly fewer American accents than *DiRT 2*.

DOUGHNUT PUNCTURE

Like very, very small laps

PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE antithesis of the long, A-to-B legs of traditional rally driving is the 'doughnut'. This circular drifting technique involves driving in the tightest circle possible. You may have seen teenagers in Vauxhall Astras attempt it in car parks late at night, or you may have seen Ken Block doing it properly in sexy, tailor-made cars. Either way, it's going to be an important technique to learn if you're to master the Gymkhana events.

FAQ







Action is presented from an 'up-court' camera angle but can be switched to a more traditional court-side view.



Dunks are performed by pushing the left stick forward and charging towards the net with the right.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

NBA Elite 11

Exploring the net

PS3

Elite? But what happened to _Live_?
Don't panic it's still the EA basketball franchise you know and love, it's just that the publisher feels that this game has had such an overhaul this year that it needs a new moniker to reflect that.

Is it just a chance to get some more attention, like when Prince changed his name to that symbol?
Perhaps, but in EA's defence there really has been a lot of tweaks that help to bring the action more under your control.

I sense some branding here...
And you'd be right, as it's being referred to as 'Hands-on Control' and it aims to give you much more influence over what your players do on the court. This includes movement and shooting. A new stick-based shooting system is in with your aim being controlled by one and power by the other much like the mechanic that was employed by *NHL* last year and worked very well. There's also real-time physics at play, so you can lash the ball away from the hoop while in defence.

So this means it's all about player skill rather than the athletes?
Yes and no. Results will depend much more on your ability than ever before but the talent of the NBA ballers also plays a part.

It's no _NBA Jam_, though, is it?
Funny you should say that – no, it is not *NBA Jam* as this is still much more a basketball sim than an arcade experience. But if you're looking to relive your youth then you can as if you buy *Elite* you'll get a code to download a revitalised version of the co-op classic. Booooom-shaka-laka.

That's something old, is there anything new?
There's several game modes to play through, such as the improved Dynasty mode where you can create a player and have him rise through the ranks. There's also full ESPN integration and something being termed as Real AI, which takes its cues from other EA Sports franchises like *Fight Night* and *FIFA* where the AI opposition 'learns' how human competitors play and mimics that so when competing against the computer it should feel like you're facing a human opponent. Skynet is probably involved somehow.

NBA Elite 11 is being developed by EA Sports. Check out its progress here: **http://nbaelite.easports.com**

JAM HOT

Old-school rules

IT MIGHT BE an obvious element to pick up on but the inclusion of a trimmed-down *NBA Jam* free with every copy of *NBA Elite 11* is sure to earn it a few extra sales. Three game modes are included and will be offered as a separate PSN download. EA claims that it will not be offering the full game at a later date as the full *NBA Jam* will only be available on the Wii.





Now that arms move independently it's much easier to steal the ball during flowing moves.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The new shooting system helps to make *Elite* a more skill-based affair.
- You get a revamped version of *NBA Jam*, which has got to be worth the price alone.
- The new physics system gives you more freedom to block and steal.
- Levels of authenticity are very high which really helps build immersion levels.

READ ME

***NBA Elite 11* has the rights to feature Air Jordan products and branding but not the man himself as he's signed up with 2K this year.**

FAQ



Those who shoot together... win together?

RELEASE DATE: LATE 2011

Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One

Wrenching you in four different ways

PS3 **A new *Ratchet & Clank* game, eh? Does this mean it's another chance for people to be unfair to it and say 'it's not as good as *Mario Galaxy*' or something?**
Yep.

Is the '4' in the title a witty statement related to the number of players who can take part in the game?
Yes.

And...
Well you can play with up to four players, online or off.

Do you know any more?
Well, yes.

And you're going to tell me?
Okay. Jeez. It's drop-in, drop-out at any point so there's no commitment necessary to sit through the entire game with the same three people. You don't even have to play it with others if you don't want to.

That's better. But why four players? What implications does this have?
Well it means a lot of co-op play. What we've seen so far points to throwing each other across gaps. Then there's using each other to grab onto so you don't fall down a pit, as well as all attacking one enemy together. Basically it's like a typical night out with three of your mates.

So who are these four characters? How does it play out? Split-screen?
First, no. It's single screen, though we have no idea how it's going to constrain movement to stop one person in the team from being a complete idiot. Secondly, the four characters are: Ratchet (shocker), Clank (surprise!), Captain Qwark (unsurprising) and Dr Nefarious (we'll admit some surprise here).

The mortal enemy of our beloved heroes? But why would they stoop to working with such a horrible piece of work? How *could* they?!
Calm down, dearie. It will all be explained in the game, but for now we know it's a result of one of Dr Nefarious's schemes going awry. The good three are forced to work with the bad one. We would assume hilarity then ensues. Or at least as much hilarity as the *Ratchet & Clank* series is capable of – a bit, but not loads.

What else can you tell me?
You're ugly and your mother dresses you funny. Also, *All 4 One* will bring the usual action you would expect from the *Ratchet & Clank* series: shooting, running, jumping, bolt-collecting, lovely visuals and so on. It's a decent prospect.

Insomniac Games is developing **Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One**. For more details, visit **www.insomniacgames.com**



No idea what this is called. We'll go with 'mega-multi-super-tether'.



MOVE OVER

Are we all for one control scheme?

THERE'S NO WORD if *All 4 One* will involve Move or not, so we'll just have to speculate right about... *now*. We reckon Insomniac will avoid using motion controls – it doesn't make sense for a standard entry to the series, it doesn't lend itself to four-player co-op and the existence of *Heroes On The Move* points to 'no'. LOGIC.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- *Ratchet & Clank* games are always welcomed with open arms around these parts.
- Four-player co-op could bring something special to the game.
- Emphasising teamwork and co-operation is always a good lesson 'for da kidz'. Or something.
- It's nice to be reminded that Insomniac still care about us.

READ ME

***All 4 One* will be the fourth *Ratchet & Clank* game released on PS3. We're glad it's managed to keep going so long.**

HANDS-ON





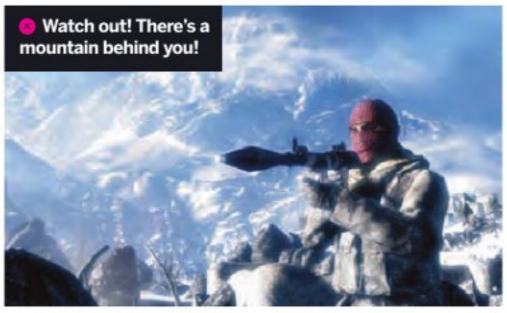
The Apache mission could go either way, but we're looking forward to it.



The A10: nature's cheat code.







Watch out! There's a mountain behind you!

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Medal Of Honor

But is it Apache on Modern Warfare?



This guy probably isn't Tier 1. No beard.



PS3

What would a war game be these days without the obligatory mission where you're in a vehicle, either controlling it (*Battlefield: Bad Company 2*) or simply going along for the ride with a massive gun (*Modern Warfare 2*, *H.A.W.X. 2*). EA's latest entry to the *Medal Of Honor* series isn't one to break with this new tradition, offering players the chance to blow the hell out of everything from the gunner's position in an Apache attack chopper. First-person *Desert Strike*, if you want.

The mission plays as you would probably guess: flying over the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, taking out insurgent targets and being peppered with RPG and anti-aircraft fire. On one hand we did hope to be able to control the chopper as it skirts about the enemy positions, but that probably wouldn't fit with the linear, story-led mission structure EALA is going for with the single-player campaign.

As well as being just as pretty as anything else we've seen of the game (just *look* at the textures on those balaclavas), there's this emphasis on realism that we hear so much about. Needless to say we are in no doubt that this is a game that apes real-life war exploits in a thoroughly accurate way. Apart from the fact that if you get shot you can recover in seconds.

> Blow the hell out of everything from the gunner's position in an Apache attack chopper

It's yet another sign that *Medal Of Honor* looks like it will turn out to be an incredibly polished, exciting title. We're still wondering as to how much it can challenge *Modern Warfare 2*'s throne, or even the upcoming *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*, but the signs are all pointing towards the good rather than the bad. Throw in DICE's multiplayer, which could be a winner, and you have a delicious-looking slice of Potential Hit Pie.

Medal Of Honor is being developed by EALA and DICE. Check out **www.medalofhonor.com** for more details.

TALIBANNED

Genuine concerns or just good marketing?

EVERYONE SEEMS TO be sticking their oar in about *Medal Of Honor*'s current war setting and the fact it allows people to select the Taliban side on multiplayer. A tiny boxout isn't the place to discuss in-depth our feelings on the issue (or non-issue, if you like), but it is definitely something we'll be putting to the devs when we speak to them next month.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Raining down hellfire missiles on an AA position is *A LOT* of fun.
- Genuine competition for *COD/MW* is something we've been waiting for.
- It may just look like real life, but it's really pretty real life.
- We find that a bit of controversy is always welcome with videogames.

READ ME

The closest the Play team has ever come to getting an actual Medal Of Honor is probably the time Ian got a trophy for netball. He was seven.

PREVIEW



Do you hear through those things, or are they just for decoration?



The battle system has been improved since the alpha.



We'd guess that's not a player character.





RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2011

Final Fantasy XIV

We chat with Hiromichi Tanaka, producer on Squenix's upcoming MMO

PS3

Why did you decide to create another *Final Fantasy* MMO at this time?

Final Fantasy XI has now been out for eight years and is quite dated, from a technological perspective. So we decided to make a new type of MMO. There are a lot of MMOs in the market that have an open world and small quests, but they don't necessarily have that huge story that we do. We're trying to be different from those other games.

How important is the story to *Final Fantasy XIV*?

Because this is an MMO, you don't necessarily have to follow the storyline but we think you'll have a much better time if you do.

How long will it take players to see the whole thing?

It depends how you level up your character but we believe it could take up to one year to see the whole story.

Do you fear that some MMO players, unfamiliar with *Final Fantasy*, might feel like they're coming to the franchise too late to join in?

There may be some people who are unfamiliar with the series, and it's very important that we communicate the game well to them. But our main target is *FFXI* players who have stuck with us for eight years and want to proceed into the next generation of MMO.

How has your approach to MMO development changed alongside the market?

We had an alpha test for *FFXIV* and received a lot of feedback from players in Japan, Europe and America. A lot of them said that 'because *World Of Warcraft* works in this way then we also expect *Final Fantasy XIV* to play in the same way'. We heard that a lot and though we're not trying to imitate any other games we are taking player feedback into account.

We believe it could take up to one year for players to see the whole story

The PS3 version is arriving six months after PC. Why is that, and how will you handle things like expansion packs in the future?

We were aiming for a simultaneous launch but, unfortunately, it was not possible. The PS3 has a limited amount of memory compared to the PCs we're aiming at. We have to optimise the data so that it will fit on the console and that's taking a lot longer than we first thought. All updates and expansion packs will launch simultaneously, cross-region and cross-platform.

What was the feedback like to your recent 3D tests?

At E3 we had a surround system with three screens in 3D, thanks to the support of Nvidia. Assuming that the player has the correct hardware, they will be able to enjoy the 3D in this way. As for feedback, because E3 was media focused, we didn't get much player feedback but we do know that they are looking forward to it.

You've mentioned that users will be able to transfer some data from *Final Fantasy XI* to *XIV*. Can you clarify this, and will it apply to PlayStation 3 players, too?

As the game itself is totally different, you won't be able to simply use the same character between games but we consciously decided to include similar race styles in *XIV*, so that *XI* fans could create a character very similar to their old avatar. But if you have a unique character name in *XI* then you will be able to transfer it to *XIV*. And yes, the account will allow you to log in on either PC or PS3.

Final Fantasy XIV is being developed by Square Enix. Check out **www.finalfantasyxiv.com** for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- There's a massive MMO-shaped gap in PS3's catalogue – what better to fill it with?
- Another *Final Fantasy* game can only ever be a good thing.
- We don't need lives anyway – sitting inside all day playing this is fine.
- Standard entry: *FINAL FANTASY XIV* LOOKS REALLY PRETTY *bzzt*

READ ME

***FFXIV* joins *DC Universe Online* and *The Agency* as a triple-whammy of MMOs coming to PS3. Will they succeed on console? Only time will tell.**

www.imagineshop.co.uk







Tiny, yet mighty.

FEED ME Squenix listens to your whining

FFXIV'S BETA WILL be well underway by the time you read this, and changes from the alpha have already been made. Namely: the battle system has been modified to allow for more tactical nuances and for easier communication between team-mates. It's good to know feedback is being taken on board from an early stage.





It's a very pretty game in parts.

It's not a traditional *FF* title, but still has events like this.

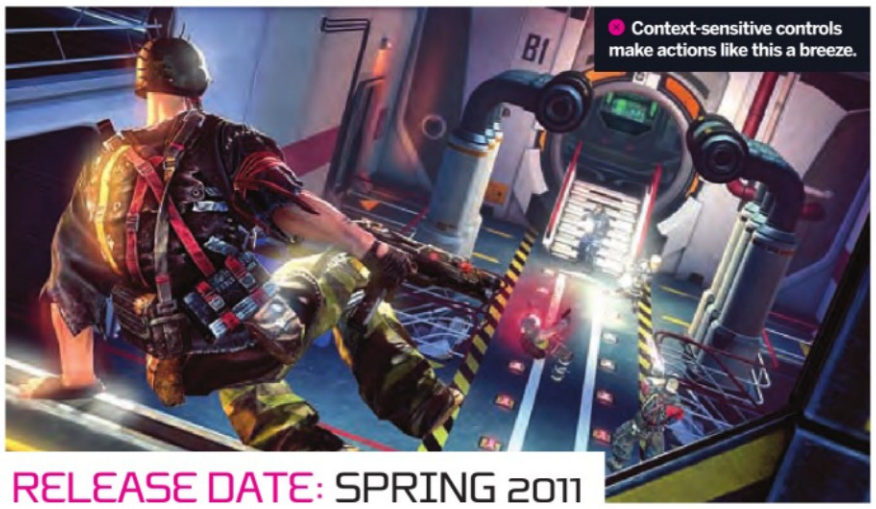






PREVIEW


Nice tats. Sorry – 'nice' tats.


Context-sensitive controls make actions like this a breeze.

RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2011

Brink

On the brin… edge of excellence

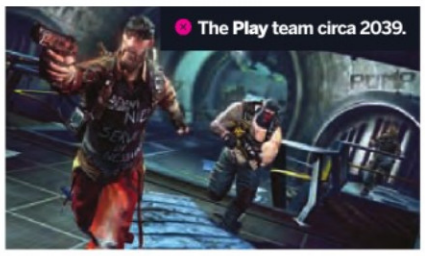
PS3

The information on *Brink* keeps on pottering out at a steady rate, and with every subsequent viewing of the game we really do get more thrilled at what we see. This is a game that will ultimately live or die by its online community, but assuming that end of things actually turns out to be well-populated and interested in actually playing the game properly (*Battlefield: Bad Company 2* snipers on Rush, we're looking at *you*) then this could well be a defining moment in online play.

But for now we can only go on the promises and brief glimpses we get of *Brink*, or the testimony of those of us who have actually been able to play it – albeit in a controlled environment.

Character creation plays a big part and players have direct control over the development of their persistent avatar. You choose a class, a look and assign skill points to each category and under each class type. Buff your speed, power, health or more class-specific stats to make yourself better the more you play. Rather than one-off, short-lived games, *Brink* relies more on this persistent aspect to reward long-term players.

Speaking of rewards, Splash Damage is set to offer players a series of rewards and unlocks in-game for completing challenges (some thinly disguised training exercises), meaning there will be a constant stream of new guns for those invested in the experience.


The Play team circa 2039.



Brink is being developed by Splash Damage. Check out **www.splashdamage.com** for more details on the game.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The game's SMART system looks innovative and useful.
- It gives Splash Damage the chance to prove itself to console owners.
- Everyone who saw it at gamescom came back with glowing accounts.
- On top of all the other great stuff *Brink* also looks really quite nice.


If we were you we'd aim for his glowing orange ass.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Bulletstorm

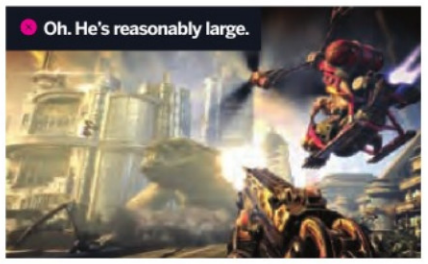
There's a storm coming (of bullets)

PS3

We have previously touted *Bulletstorm* as 'over-the-top' and other such descriptions, but a quick check reveals we haven't called it 'mindless'. That's a good job, really, as it turns out People Can Fly's boss, Adrian Chmielarz, is tired of people calling it the m-word.

Chmielarz tweeted his disagreement recently, claiming *Bulletstorm* has "a hundred times more strategy involved in 'skillshot' gameplay than in 95% of shooters out there". And you know what? We agree, at least from what we've seen of the game so far.

Yes, the new reveal of the four-barrelled shotgun may ignite that primal part of the brain that always wanted an *even bigger* shotty in *Doom*, and yes the thought of enemies called Burnouts may make you think of fast-paced, ridiculous action, but that's ignoring how the game actually plays. Taken at face value it certainly conjures up some mindless blasting fun, but when you've seen it – when you think about what's going on – it doesn't take long to realise *Bulletstorm* could genuinely be one of the most tactical shooters released in recent times.


Oh. He's reasonably large.

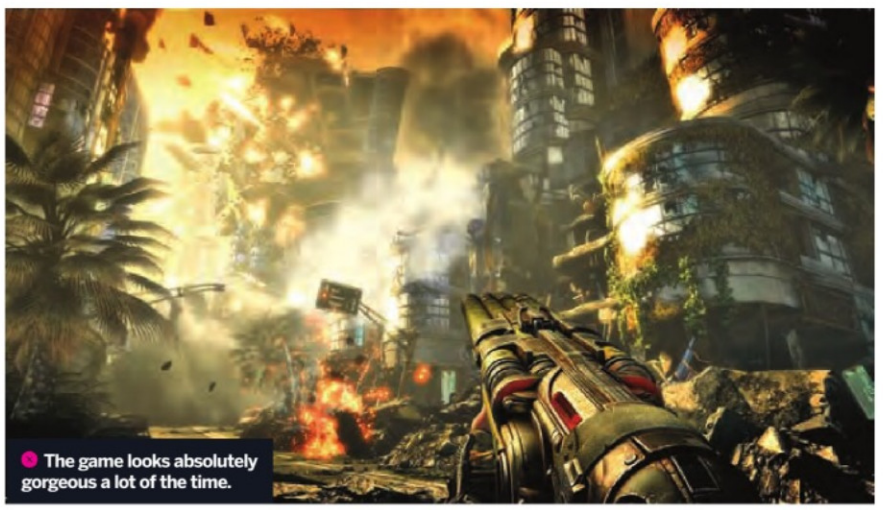


The scope for combinations is huge and the technique involved with setting them up will require skill, planning and quick reaction times. That doesn't sound mindless to us – it sounds like a huge amount of (strategic) fun.

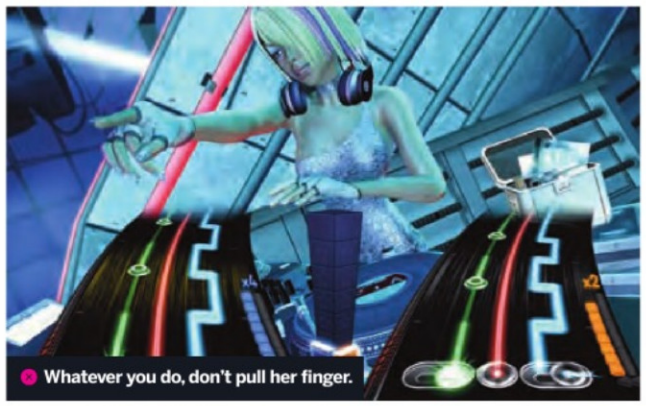
Bulletstorm is being developed by People Can Fly. Check out **www.bulletstorm.com** for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Expect to see more strategy than you might currently… expect.
- It still looks like it's going to be a real hoot and a holler.
- We may point it out every time, but it does look absolutely lovely.
- Get your hands on a quad-barrelled shotgun. 'Nuff said.


The game looks absolutely gorgeous a lot of the time.

HANDS-ON


Whatever you do, don't pull her finger.





Don't cha wish you'd played *DJ Hero 2*, like us. Don't cha?

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

DJ Hero 2

Mixes well with others

PS3

In our multiplayer hands-on with *DJ Hero 2* we tried all five multiplayer Battle modes, none of which really made much difference to the feel of the game. You're basically doing much the same thing in each mode, but getting scored differently.

First on the Battle list is Star Battle, which is the most straightforward of the five. It's about getting more stars than your opponent, which essentially equates to getting a higher score. There's no real interactivity, but you do get to sit next to each other.

Accumulator is next, and is probably the most complicated mode, given that you have to hit the Euphoria button during a streak to 'bank' the points earned in that streak. Miss a beat and all the points are lost. Completely forget to hit the Euphoria button at any point during the track (like we did) and you get no points at all, even if you played it really well (like we didn't). It's a good idea for a mode, though, and can be a good leveller as there's a lot of incentive for good players to risk longer streaks, but blow it and suffer humiliating defeat.

Checkpoint is the 'match play' to Star Battle's 'stroke play'. For those not familiar with golfing terms, this means you play to win more sections of the track than your opponent rather than to perform better over the whole track. The main difference this makes is that if you mess it up royally for a few bars in a row, you've still got a decent chance to catch up again. DJ Battle is the same as Checkpoint but uses its own mixes tailor-made for Battles with a turn-taking structure, and works better for it.

Streak, as you may be able to deduce from the name, is about getting a better highest streak score than your opponent. It's an interesting twist, but usually means that only one section of the song (ie the longest, easiest bit) actually counts. It's *possible* that different players might get their highest streak on different parts of a track, but not that likely on most songs.

So yeah, multiplayer on *DJ Hero 2*. It's good to have it, but it doesn't lend any particularly exciting new dimensions to the gameplay. Not that this is a criticism – we're glad FreeStyle hasn't messed too much with the existing formula.

DJ Hero 2 is being developed by FreeStyle Games. Check the website for more details: **www.freestylegames.com**






In multiplayer, whichever player hits a Freestyle section first locks the other player out of it.





PLAY TIËSTO

Introducing this year's king of clubs

THE HOTTEST NEW *DJ Hero* signing from the real-life world of DJing is Tiësto, the Dutch DJ, producer and all-round good egg who's played pretty much every major venue on the planet and is very famous and popular among fans of dance music. Above on the right, we see him in-game and on the left, here he is trying not to look painfully self-conscious while pretending to play with a *DJ Hero* deck. His mixes are smashing, but it has to be said he's not quite as eye-catching to look at as Deadmau5.





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Tweaks and improvements across the board.
- Features almost all of our favourite pop stars.
- DJ Battles feel just like DJ battles.
- You can make some of it up as you go along.

READ ME

Sequel to the DJing spin-off (pun intended) of the mighty *Guitar Hero* franchise. It's about playing two records at once.



Roger Federer: The best a man can get?



Sega has got Murray's 'I've lost again' face spot-on.

FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Virtua Tennis 4

Or: Virtua Tennis Fore! Oh, wait. No. Scratch that


Arm-wrestling: replacing normal tie-breaks from 2011.

PS3 There are certain types of game you fully expect to have motion control foisted upon them, but that doesn't stop us from getting excited. When these same games have a shiny layer of 3D goodness dolloped on top of that then we have to do all we can to stop our minds exploding with joy. *Virtua Tennis 4* is trying to make our minds explode.

Combining the incredible fidelity of Move's motion control with one of the best tennis series ever created may seem like an obvious choice for Sega and the members of Hitmaker involved in the creation of the new game. And that's because it is. 3D is still just a nice bonus – Move could be a game-changer. *Virtua Tennis 4* reacts to your swing style, stance, timing, how you position the racquet and... well, all the other things that actually matter in real tennis. And by that we mean actual tennis, not 'real tennis' the sport.

But don't you worry your tiny minds if you can't cope with the double-onslaught of the extra dimension and the physical exertion (see 'But... but...' boxout). Sega has, of course, retained the ability to play it in boring, old 2D, with the boring, old DualShock 3. Even though it's likely to be boring and old when played like this, if it's anything like any other *Virtua Tennis* game ever made it'll still be a hoot.

At the time of writing there is no word of *Virtua Tennis 4* coming to any console other than PS3. This makes us think it should well be made for Move from the ground up, and therefore will be wonderfully suited to motion control. Combined with Sega's history of making great tennis games, we have yet another game to look forward to in an ever-increasing anticipation-pile.

Virtua Tennis 4 is being developed by Sega. Check out **www.sega.co.uk/games/virtua-tennis-4** for more details.

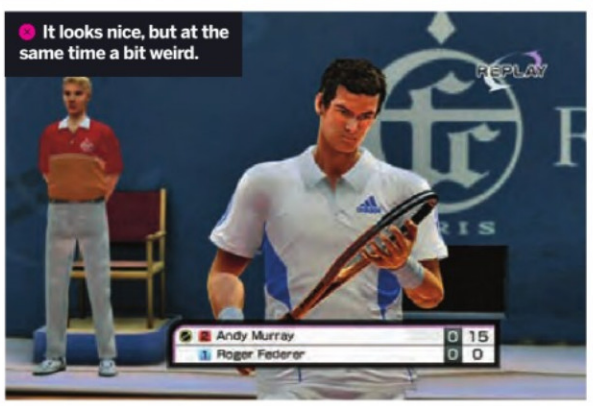


BUT... BUT...

Lamentations of lazy writers



ONE THING THAT keeps popping up and worrying us is the amount of physical effort necessary in these tennis games (*Virtua Tennis 4* and table tennis on *Sports Champions*). They involve real *effort* to get the most out of them and, well – we're really, really lazy. Like, *really* lazy. This is going to be a (physically) tough game to review.



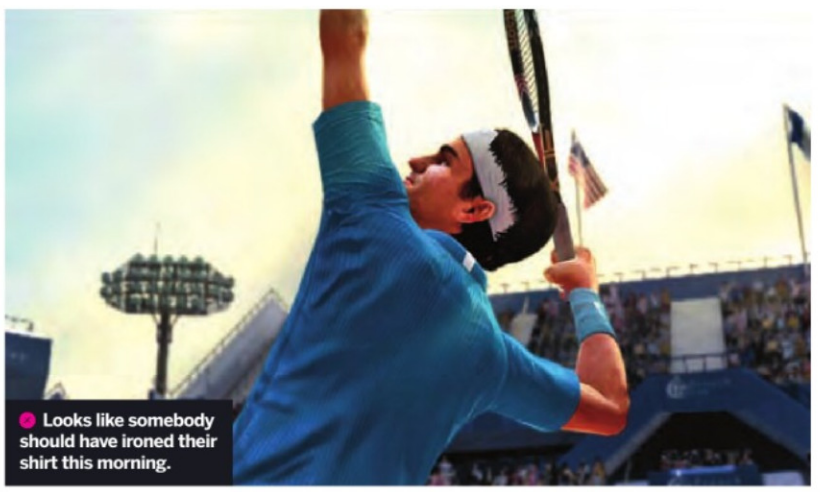
It looks nice, but at the same time a bit weird.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The return of one of the best sports series of all time has us excited.
- Move and 3D compatibility should give the game something extra.
- The chance to beat Andy Murray every single day is a good thing.
- Lovely Roger looks just like you would expect Lovely Roger to look.

READ ME

Tennis was* invented in 352BC by Mongolian tribesmen, as a by-product of an attempt to figure out a more efficient way of drying toad-skin.
***Wasn't.**


Looks like somebody should have ironed their shirt this morning.

HANDS-ON



Turn the city into your skate park. Selfishly.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Shaun White Skateboarding

Re-colour the world with a touch of ginger

PS3

Shaun White Skateboarding sees a new challenger enter the ring, currently occupied by Activision and EA. What does the little ginger bloke have going for him that the competition doesn't? To be honest, not a lot we haven't seen before – but it does approach from an angle that is at least refreshing. What we've seen so far, though, hasn't exactly overwhelmed us.

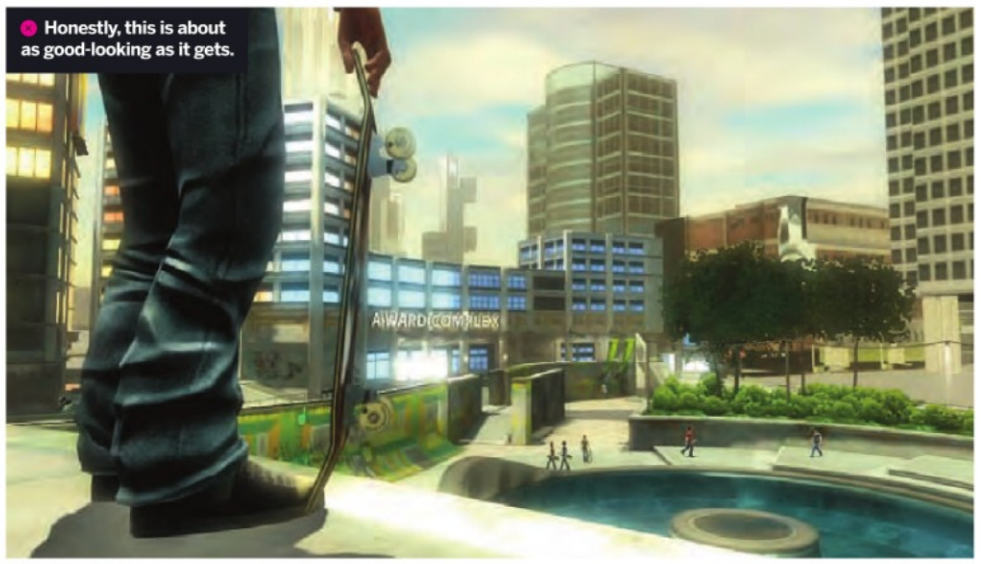
The story sees your created character tasked with overthrowing the Ministry – leaders of the Orwellian nightmare of a society the populace currently exists under. You have to free the people, to let them think for themselves, to bring colour back to the world and encourage creativity and make them *human* again. And how do you do this? Why, by re-opening shops and plastering advertising all over the city obviously. Because as we all know, the best way to rally against The Man is to wholeheartedly endorse capitalism.

This is a very, very stupid element of skateboarding culture, though, so it's not something we're going to dwell on. Even if it is monumentally dumb, hypocritical and irritating.

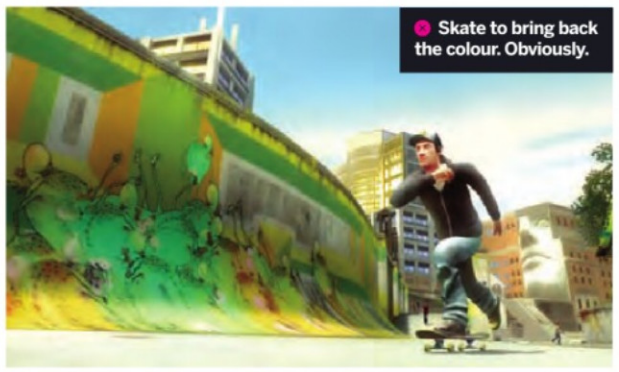
The game plays like a mix between the *Tony Hawk* titles of old (pre-*Ride*) and EA's *Skate* series, using a combination of button presses and analogue stick shifts to trick your way through the city. It's an interesting combination and we can see it working out okay, but Ubisoft has to make sure it irons out the kinks in the system – delayed reactions to your inputs don't lend themselves to what anyone would consider a truly great skating game. It has to be responsive, accurate and do what the player wants it to do all of the time. Right now, *Shaun White Skateboarding* just doesn't hit those notes.

It's a nice idea and injects something different into the 'boarding genre, and it's rather satisfying to return colour to a once-dull area. We'll have to wait and see if the issues we found with the game are resolved before its release and our review. Until then, we're remaining cautious about this one. One thing's for certain, though – it's not *Ride*.

Shaun White Skateboarding is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Check out **www.shaunwhitegame.com** for more details on the game.



Honestly, this is about as good-looking as it gets.

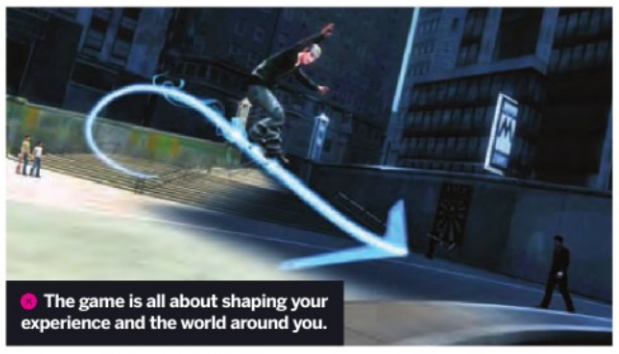


Skate to bring back the colour. Obviously.

DO I AMUSE YOU?

Straight-face society takes a back seat

THIS DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE portrayed by Shaun White and co isn't as serious as you might initially believe. Thankfully, the whole thing is handled with tongue firmly in cheek (apart from the whole 'woo capitalism!' thing). We applaud taking the pish out of oneself, though it's not actually the funniest of games.



The game is all about shaping your experience and the world around you.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's an interesting take on the popular skateboarding genre.
- A mix of the 'other' control schemes out there. Namely *Tony Hawk*'s and *Skate*'s.
- Shaun White has some lovely ginger locks. The lucky bugger.
- There's certainly some fun to be had as it doesn't take itself *too* seriously.

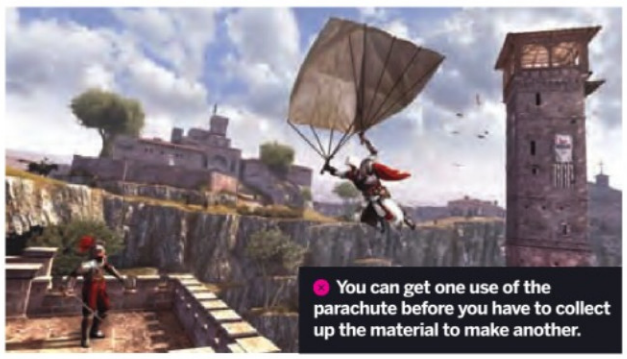
READ ME

There have been many tales spun over the years warning of the dangers of a surveillance society. George Orwell probably couldn't skate, though.









You can get one use of the parachute before you have to collect up the material to make another.



Every character in multiplayer has their own unique kill moves.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

Dying is what brothers are for

PS3

What should we do when in Rome?
Do as the Romans do allegedly. We would recommend leading its citizens in a Robin Hood-style revolt, reclaiming the city from the influence of the Borgia.

I'm still not getting this whole sequel thing. Is this a proper *Assassin's Creed* game?
Yes. Don't let the lack of a 'III' in the title confuse you. This is a proper follow-up to *Assassin's Creed II*. It has lots of new gameplay ideas to prove it, too.

You mean hand-gliders we get to use once?
No, this is like a wish list of features that fans have been calling out for since the first *Assassin's Creed*. We've seen horse-to-horse assassinations, city renovations, assassins guild recruitment and a parachute in this new game.

Woah! Too fast, can we have those one at a time?
Horse-to-horse assassinations speak for themselves. Ride up alongside someone on horseback and you can assassinate them with your hidden blade. You can also do leaping assassinations on mounted targets. All very handy since horses can now be ridden in the city.

City renovation is much like what you did with the Villa in *ACII*. Find shops, invest in them and unlock new equipment. Difference here is that helping these shops helps the local area break free of the Borgia.

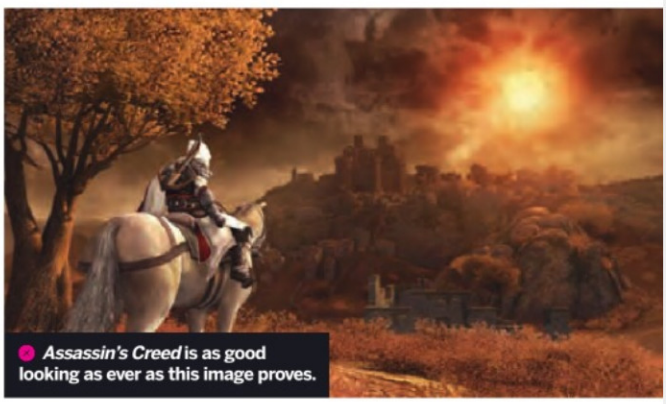
Recruiting assassins involves keeping an eye out for potential recruits, perhaps citizens being harassed by local guards. Help them out and they may offer to join you.

Lastly, Leonardo's Parachute can be deployed at certain times for one use allowing for base jumping from great heights. You'll need to collect the materials again to make a new one after each use, though.

What about those cool assassin's tombs? Any more of those?
Not that we've seen, but in order to open some shops you'll need to take out Borgia strongholds. The one we saw involved sneaking into a tower and chasing the commander. It was very similar to the first *ACII* tomb.

And is it all based in Rome?
Actually, no. Ubisoft revealed that Ezio would also be going to Spain to fight a man named Cesare. Your assassins can also be sent abroad.

Brotherhood is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Visit **assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com** for more info.



Assassin's Creed is as good looking as ever as this image proves.



MULTIPLE TARGETS

We're all going on a European tour

RECRUITING ASSASSINS ISN'T just about having buddies to fight with. You can also send them out across Europe. These missions can be found in pigeon coops around the city. Just select who you want to go, you'll be told what chance of success they have and should they survive they'll earn experience to help their training.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A hatful of new features largely straight off the wish lists of fans.
- Build your own network of assassins to send out on missions around Europe.
- Ezio continues to develop as an assassin, with new skills and equipment.
- The full impact of the multiplayer has yet to be revealed and promises much.

READ ME

As well as being able to use things like smoke bombs, your assassins will also be able to ride horses just like Ezio.

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XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE PS3 PlayStation Network THE WAY NVIDIA 3D VISION READY PLAYS BEST ON ALIENWARE SQUARE ENIX.

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REVIEWS

Playing bad games so you don't have to



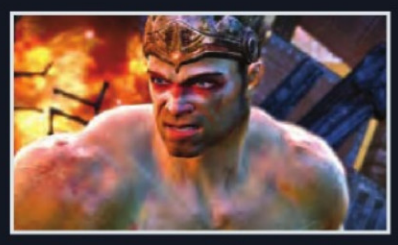
Ben Biggs

Reviewed: *Phantasy Star Portable 2*

Ben was last seen patrolling the Boscombe seafront wearing a gladiator helmet and brandishing a large, two-handed sword. If you see this, do not under any circumstances approach him – he is armed and thought to be extremely dangerous. Biggs could kill a man with just one thumb, so God knows what he might do with a sword. He could have your eye out, for a start.

currently playing: *Civilization Revolution*

on review



76 Enslaved: Odyssey To The West PS3
You got owned



86 Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow PS3
Cross words



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95 EyePet: Move PS3
95 WRC: FIA World Rally Championship PS3
96 John Daly's ProStroke Golf PS3
96 UFC Undisputed 2010 PSP
98 Phantasy Star Portable 2 PSP





Ian

Reviewed: *FIFA 11, PES 2011, Dead Rising 2 and many, many more*

This month Ian gave himself food poisoning by eating some dodgy gyoza dumplings. He thought he was going to die, but didn't. This near-death experience gave him a new appetite for life. But now he's back to being the Ian we know and love. He just sits there sighing and saying strings of rude words with a resigned tone. We love it.

currently playing: *Alpha Protocol*



Adam Barnes

Reviewed: *R.U.S.E.*

We asked Adam what he'd been up to this month and he sat staring at us with an awkward smile on his face shaking his head slightly while we stared back in silence for almost two whole hours before he finally said, "I played mini-golf." Well, at least it was worth the wait. He got a hole in one on the tricky double-bank hole in Bournemouth Gardens. You're glad you read this, aren't you?

currently playing: *Demon's Souls*



Gavin Mackenzie

Reviewed: *Vanquish, Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow, F1 2010, Guitar Hero 5, EyePet: Move*

Gav finally received his doctorate in *Peggle* arts from the University Of Peggle this month. "It feels like a life's work coming to an end," he said during a speech he gave at the graduation ceremony. "I'd like to thank Master Hu for never losing faith in my ability, and Lord Cinderbottom, for giving me renewed hope during those tricky last two levels."

currently playing: *Peggle Nights*



RELEASE DATE: 22 OCTOBER

Vanquish

PLAY classic award

PLAY game of the month award PS3

Another masterpiece from the creator of Resident Evil



DETAILS

Publisher
Sega
Developer
PlatinumGames
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Third-person shooter
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
15
Website
www.platinumgames.co.jp/

PS3 We are breathless and visibly trembling, we feel out of sync with the real world – it seems quiet, slow, empty – and we're dying to tell someone about the absolutely mental stuff we just did. We're halfway through *Vanquish* and it has peaked, doing so with a level of style, spectacle and sheer, cast-iron testicular fortitude unmatched by anything in any other game we've played before. It'll slide a bit downhill between this point and the end. But it will be sliding on its knees, and will leave a huge, sexy shower of sparks in its wake on the way down. Yes, even when *Vanquish* runs out of ways to up its own considerable ante, it runs out with style.

> We will say that when it's at its best, Vanquish is *the best*

And when it's at its best, it is *the best*. The first half consists of almost nothing but ever-escalating, heart-pounding, pure-adrenaline action sequences. It's not just action, it's triple-A action. We can think of no other game that has made our heart pound, our eyes pop and our big, fat stupid faces laugh quite as hard as *Vanquish* did for those three hours.

So, how does it get to be so good? Well, it's like a perfect marriage of East and West and of old and new. It makes you feel like classic hardcore Japanese 2D shooters make you feel – pumped up, excited and like you're the baddest mofo in the galaxy – but at the same time manages to be not just contemporary, but fresh and progressive, too. It's not that there's much, if any, actual originality here, it's that PlatinumGames has taken fistfuls of the best ideas from the greatest action games of the last 30 years, boiled them down to what really makes them the best, then carefully ensured that every idea fulfils its potential while not one is leaned on too heavily. Lessons of the past have been used to create a game that takes a step into the future.

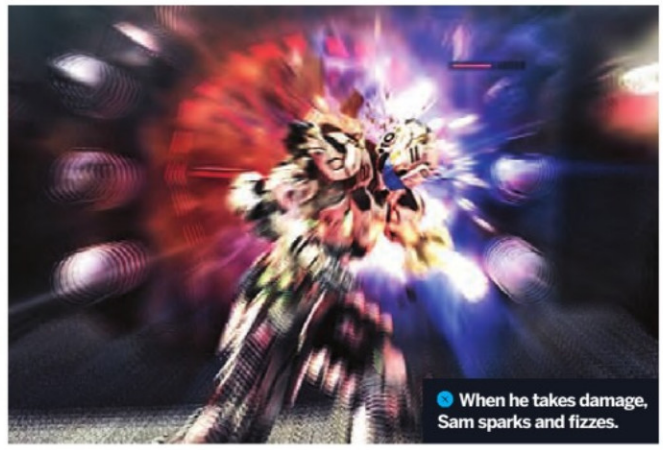
There are, for example, QTE-ish bits in *Vanquish*, but PlatinumGames has really thought about *exactly* what benefits there are to that kind of gameplay and has very strictly only used them with those benefits in mind. So, for a start they're only used very sparingly. You do not have to press a designated button within a set time limit just to move what is essentially a cut-scene onto the next bit and to avoid having to start a whole section again. No, your hero, Sam, will often just do his own action hero thing on his own without the need for pointless prompting. Only when there's an opportunity for a direct, tangible link between the action and the prompts do you get them. So if there's something that requires a feat of physical power – such as making a run-up to a *huge* leap – you might be required to bash the daylights out of a single button for a bit. It works because bashing a button is a feat of physical power when you're the kind of guy who sits on his ass playing games all day. Similarly, you might be told to move the stick in a series of different directions to dodge the devastating blows of a powerful enemy. Again, it makes sense because it's not far removed from what you'd normally do in-game. And that's about it for *Vanquish*'s QTEs – there aren't many and they're only called upon when they can add something.

And the same goes for all of *Vanquish*'s features – the sliding it got from mech games, the cover system it got from *Gears Of War*, the bullet time it got from *Max Payne*, the giant bosses it got from *Lost Planet* and the crazy storytelling it got from *Metal Gear*. Every one is an important and perfectly fitting piece of the Ultimate Action Game puzzle, but the balance between them here is such that none of them ever get overindulged.

The cover system is a particularly interesting one. Our initial impression of *Vanquish* was that it was a cover shooter, only fast. But it's not. In fact, the more we played it, the less we used the cover system. We know this because cover use is one of many stats tracked by the game, and by the last few missions we were in cover less than 2% of the time. Cover points are liberally scattered throughout >



This game features some of the best and bluest explosions you'll ever see.


When he takes damage, Sam sparks and fizzes.





STRIKE A POSE

Sam has a cool-looking stance for every eventuality



'THE 1990' It's the dawning of a new era. *RoboCop* has made dudes who look like robots hot property, *Turrican* has taken gamers by storm, the first 16-bit games consoles are out and this pose sums up the entire vibe of the period. In the future, this is how we will fight, and in the early-Nineties, this is how we will dance.



'THE HARD BOILED' Leaping through the air in a horizontal position in slow motion while firing a gun would look cool even if it was a guy in a headless chicken suit doing it. When he lands you just want to run up to him, say 'Hi!', slip him your number then scamper away blushing and fanning your face with your hands.



'THE RUSTY GUSSET' This is the pose we were most often frozen in when using bullet time, and it's therefore a supermassivecool stance. He's low and focused, but ready to pounce back into action as soon as his ARS juice runs out. When the war's over, Sam should so audition for 'Cats'.



'THE RECLINER' The secret of true cool is making things that are actually very difficult and stressful – such as saving the free world from killer Communist space-robots, for example – look like they're really easy and involve no effort by, say, lying down. He does this while travelling at about 100mph, by the way.



'THE CODPIECE' When you're single-handedly saving the world from terrible peril at breakneck pace, the last thing you want is for your balls to get all squashed up, and there's only one way to guarantee that doesn't happen – open wide with the thighs. We bet he gets a refreshing airflow through the crotch area when he does this.



'THE 10-YEAR-OLD BOY AT A WEDDING RECEPTION' He's in his best trousers, the disco has started, but none of the adults are drunk enough to hit the shiny dance floor yet. It's too good a chance to miss. Run-up, slide on the knees, bollocking from mum. *Vanquish* is basically that experience in shoot-'em-up form.

> the game, but we gradually learned that snapping to cover wasn't always our best option. Sometimes, though, it was *vital*, and that's the cool thing about *Vanquish* – every option you have will, at one point or another, be the best thing you can do, or perhaps even the one thing you *must* do.

When we did use the snap-to cover system it tended to be purely because we were hurt and wanted a safe place to recuperate for a few seconds. After the first couple of missions we all but completely stopped using the 'pop-out and shoot from cover' method, preferring instead to leap out then immediately hold the aim button which, during an agility stunt, activates a bullet-time mode. This is extremely useful given how relentless and fast-paced *Vanquish* is, but it does use up your ARS suit's limited power. The time you spend waiting for your suit to recharge is often the time you die, so there's an excellent risk/reward dynamic at work, whereby you really *have* to make that bullet time count. This method of coming *right* out of cover and staying there for as long as we dared reminded us more of *Space Invaders* than a modern cover shooter, particularly as a lot of the cover is destructible and won't protect you from heavier enemy attacks. There's that perfect marriage of old and new we were talking about earlier.

Bullet time is extremely useful but it does use up your ARS suit's limited power

It's also worth mentioning that bullet time is automatically activated if you take too much damage. At first we thought that this was to give you a chance to evade danger, but it's cleverer than that. Yes, it is a lifeline, but it's also a punishment of sorts because, while you can deactivate bullet time if you activated it manually, you can't when it auto-starts, so it will run out and overheat. That can put you in serious danger if you're under heavy fire, as it then takes a long time to cool down and recharge. Early in the game there's usually plenty of room to retreat, but you're often pretty much surrounded during later missions, so your only option is to kill everything before your suit blows a fuse. If you don't, you probably won't last as long as it takes to recharge. Basically, make a major error and you're suddenly forced into a kill or be killed situation. Once you learn that this is how it works, these situations become desperate, exhilarating, last-ditch battles and the relief when you survive one gives you a huge rush.

That just leaves one more major feature of the ARS suit to discuss. Our main man Sam can slide along the ground at high speeds either on his knees or on his ass, depending on what weapon he's using and what direction he's going. We can't really pinpoint why but this is awesome. You'll probably use it a lot just for the sheer hell of it at first. But, as with everything else in this game, you'll soon learn there's a time and a place for it. Use it at the right time and it'll give you a vital edge in combat. Use it at the wrong time, and you'll probably end up dead.

It's generally handy for getting around quickly, but it uses up the same ARS juice as your bullet time so you need to be more selective with how you use it. It's also possible to activate bullet time during a slide, but this is quite hard to do properly and is very seldom

Or you could try

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots Issue 167
If you're into over-the-top Japanese insanity then you'll love both these games. **92%**



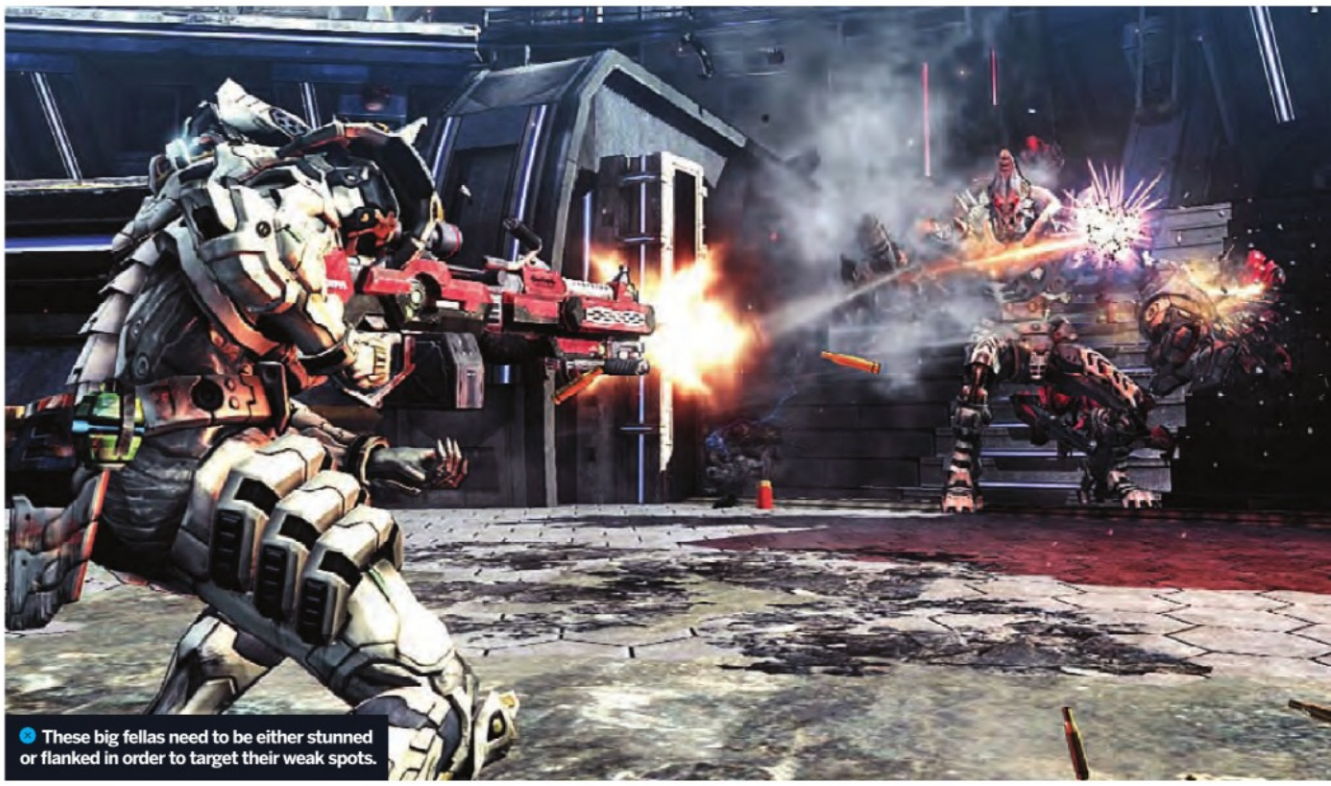
CIGGY STARDUST

Proof that smoking doesn't make you look good



IN COMBAT SAM always looks as cool as flipping heck, but the rest of the time he tries really hard to look cool, but fails miserably. Every spare moment he gets, he sparks up a cigarette, in much the same manner as a 15 year old hanging around outside a McDonald's lights up. He also swears like he's trying to impress someone. Such a try-hard, but strangely loveable with it.





These big fellas need to be either stunned or flanked in order to target their weak spots.



of any significant use, at least as far as we can tell.

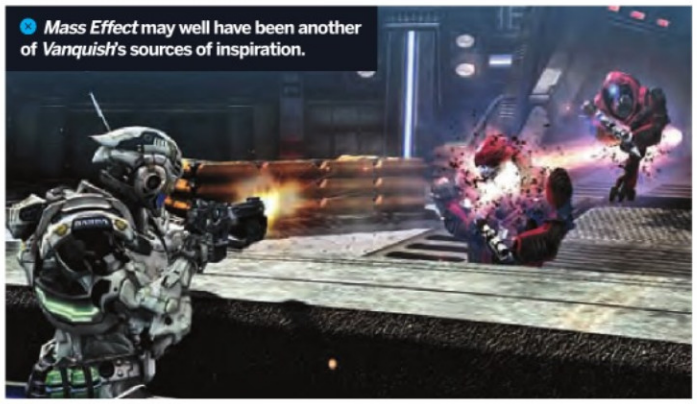
By now, *Vanquish* is probably sounding like a pretty hardcore game, and it certainly is one. But we should point out that it's not hardcore because it's especially difficult. It's not the easiest game ever either, but according to the stats tracker we only died 26 times during the campaign, which isn't *that* punishing. Plus those deaths were mostly pretty spread out and there was nothing we would call a difficulty spike or a brick wall. That's another major positive for *Vanquish* actually – it never once annoyed or frustrated us, which is quite an achievement for such a demanding game. It can certainly be very harsh, but it's always fair and you can always see where you've gone wrong if you're honest with yourself.

So yes, it's not really the difficulty that makes *Vanquish* hardcore, it's the fact that you have to put a fair bit of effort in to get the most out of it. The learning curve, while both steady and fair, is long and steep. It took a few hours before we felt like we were playing it something like the way it was *meant* to be played. We made a point of experimenting and attempting difficult moves throughout our first playthrough and intend to replay the game in order to improve our skills and >

Previously... in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 195
"Introduces a cool-looking character, slick controls and a massive injection of pace and fluidity."


Mass Effect may well have been another of *Vanquish*'s sources of inspiration.


Melee attacks are powerful, but use up a lot of suit juice, so must be used sparingly.


Many of the game's best moments come during battles against these giant robots.


This would be a good time to slide around on your knees.


Leaping over cover in slow motion and blasting a robot in the face is a pleasure on a par with eating cake and biscuits at the same time.

> scores, and anyone who shares that kind of mentality will go gaga for *Vanquish*. Anyone playing it like a regular cover shooter might find it just seems like a regular cover shooter, though. Quite a short one, too, if you're not bothered about skills and scores. But the point is it's aimed squarely at people who are.

That's the main thing – *Vanquish*'s gameplay – out of the way then. It's multi-faceted, streamlined and deep. It's relentless and hardcore, but fair. It is, in short, fan-bloody-tastic. So how then does its presentation measure up?

Again we get the best of both old and new and East and West, although appreciation of what PlatinumGames has done in this department may vary according to personal taste. *Vanquish* has a traditional Japanese art style, which is very much rooted in manga and anime. It's striking, somewhat cartoonish and unapologetically grandiose. It's rendered beautifully and bolstered by superb visual effects and we love it. However, those with a preference for the darker, grittier, more realistic look of, say, *Killzone* or *Dead Space* might be a little turned off.

It's a similar story with the audio. Again, the quality is unquestionable. Everything makes a lot of big, meaty noise and there are some brilliant surround-sound effects when bullets and shells zip past. It's a beautiful cacophony, never an ugly din. But the music, like the art style, has its feet planted firmly in the golden age of Japanese shooters. It's 100 per cent hard techno and it pounds away gleefully whenever there is action, and that's almost all the time. A perfect fit if you ask us and, apart from anything else, it tells your heart how fast and how hard it should be beating at any given time, but it might not sit comfortably with those used to the licensed, orchestral or ambient soundtracks fashionable in 2010.

Or you could try



Stranglehold Issue 159
Very rough around the edges but a similar, if vastly inferior, brand of fun to *Vanquish*. **65%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk



ONE GUN – LOADS OF FUN

An answer to awkward questions about inventory?



YOU KNOW HOW some shooters let you carry multiple weapons, but don't bother addressing the issue of how the hell you're supposed to carry them all? *Vanquish* is not one of those games. Your weapons are essentially plug-ins to your suit and you can have three installed at any one time. Changing weapons involves transforming your gun into different forms. The animations make you go "Ooh..." although you're always too busy to appreciate them, except in the tutorial.

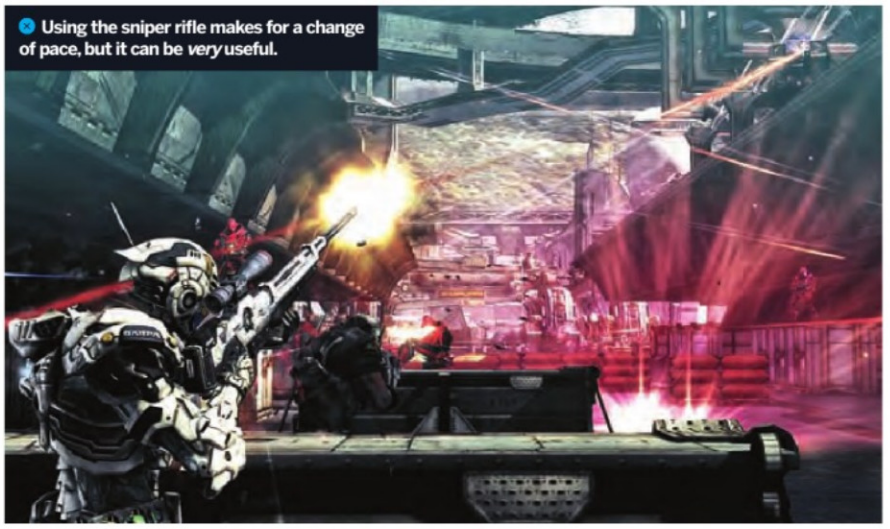


Its numerous visual filters make *Vanquish* a game that looks notably better in motion than in stills.





These guys have a relationship built on a corny mix of mutual hatred and mutual respect.



Using the sniper rifle makes for a change of pace, but it can be *very* useful.

That just leaves the story and characters, which, out of all the things in the game, are the most glaringly non-contemporary. It's very hard to tell whether it's taking the piss or not, which in itself may well be the intention. We certainly enjoyed the story, but we're not going to lie to you... it is *crap*. Think *Modern Warfare 2*'s plot but more over the top and less convoluted. It's told through characters whose dialogue seems to consist almost entirely of clichés like "Do you want to live forever?" when leading an attack and "This should be fun!" when finding a good weapon. The gravel-voiced men clash over points of military protocol and the pretty, big-eyed girl remotely offers help and a little feminine sentimentality from within the safe confines of a tubular cage made of holographic touch screens. You've seen it all before, right? If perhaps not delivered with quite this level of exaggerated conviction. We're not sure whether we were laughing at it or with it, but we were definitely laughing. Quite loud sometimes, too.

Whether it's tongue in cheek or not (and we *think* it is – ARS suit!?), it would be missing the point of *Vanquish* to fault it for its cheesy story and characters, but we thought you ought to be warned. The only real disappointment we had was that the second half of the campaign didn't deliver quite what the first half promised it would. There's no denying it has replayability, but for only half of such a short game to be as good as it absolutely can be is a shame. Only a little bit of a shame, though, when you consider what great things *Vanquish does* achieve. So many developers try to mix various elements of other games together, but we can't recall *ever* seeing it done as assuredly as it is here. We'll say it again: when it *peaks* it's the best action game ever, but it peaks just a little too briefly.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

The Japanese games industry needs more games like this. All the relentless pace and slick style of a classic 2D Japanese action game in a 3D modern masterpiece.

93%



We won't spoil it for you, but you should pay close attention to what these Marines say when you rescue them.

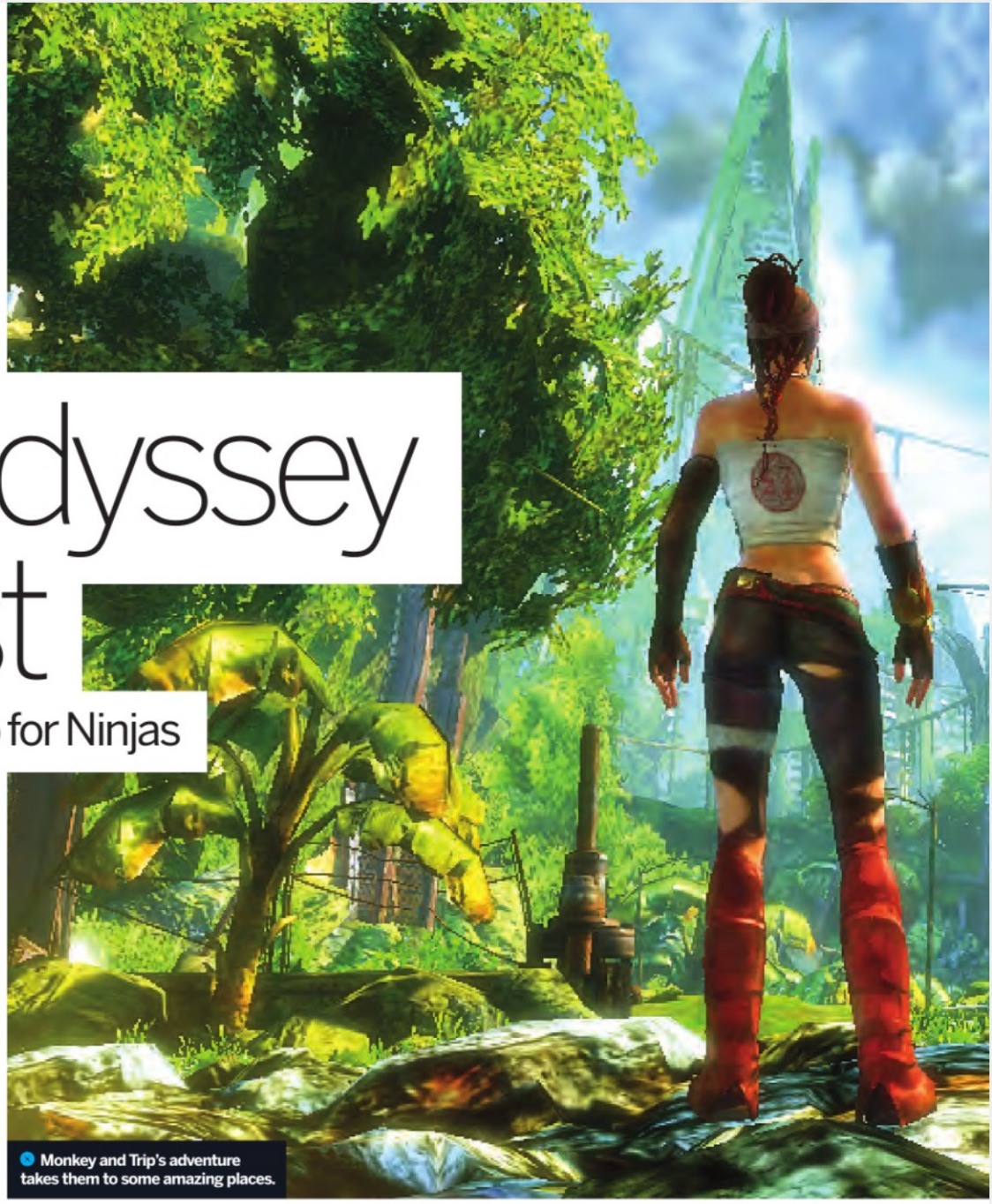


It might make for an exciting screenshot, but this really isn't an advisable tactic.

RELEASE DATE: 8 OCTOBER

Enslaved: Odyssey To The West

One small step for man, one giant leap for Ninjas


Monkey and Trip's adventure takes them to some amazing places.



DETAILS

Publisher
Namco Bandai
Developer
Ninja Theory
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action Adventure
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, Sixaxis, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
16
Website
enslaved.namco.com

PS3 From the moment we set our eyes on *Enslaved*, the latest game from *Heavenly Sword* creator Ninja Theory, it was clear that it was working on something special. Having now played the final game it's even more obvious that this development team has moved on leaps and bounds since its last, PS3-exclusive effort and that elusive marriage of story and gameplay is much closer to being achieved. Thanks to help from great British media talent like Alex Garland (writer), Andy Serkis (actor) and Nitin Sawhney (music) complementing the unique vision of the Ninja Theory team itself, *Enslaved* is a rare gem of a game even if it is far from perfect.

But let's concentrate on those positives for the time being, none of which stronger than the story and the character development. *Enslaved* begins with these archetypal leads and makes them its own. Monkey, our lead character and reluctant hero, is the alpha male. He's a loner and cares little for the company of others. It will come as no surprise that his cold, hostile shell begins to break away as he spends time with Trip. Her timid, gentle, but intelligent nature begins to chip away at Monkey's cold exterior even though she essentially has him trapped by the slave headband she placed on him.

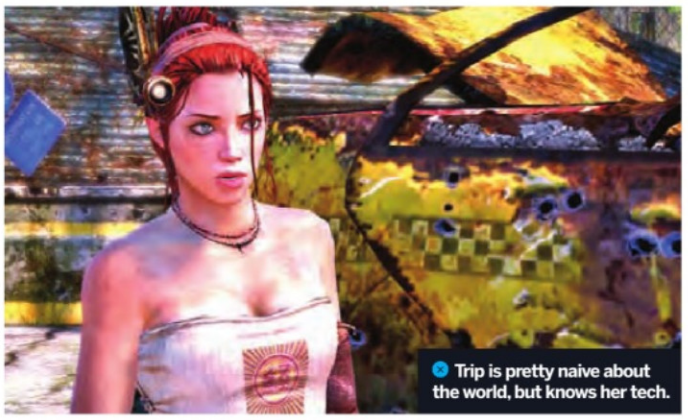
So far, so by the numbers, but thanks to some superb performance-capture sessions with Serkis (Monkey) and Lindsey Shaw (Trip) there's a subtlety to the cut-scenes and such natural conversation that we were drawn into their exploits. In terms of performance this goes beyond even what *Heavy Rain* managed to achieve. It's not just about the dialogue, but the body language and facial expressions, the gaps between the lines that say as much as words could. This subtlety is what elevates what at its base is a straightforward, often-told tale of opposites attracting as they survive peril after peril to something much smarter and more rewarding.

The simple concept of Trip enslaving Monkey using an electronic headband so that he has no choice but to do as she says and help her get home, gets things rolling. The tension between the pair, the short answers and snide, offhand remarks between them show their lack of trust, but as danger rears its ugly, metallic head again and again a relationship is forged and the idea that Monkey is in any way a slave to Trip's wishes is more or less abandoned. He comes to take on Trip's quest as his own, almost as a point of pride. Thankfully that means the game can go on for just a little longer.

> As danger rears its ugly, metallic head again and again a strong relationship is forged

As it is Ninja Theory has placed enough twists, turns and red herrings within the plot and weaved enough of its storytelling into gameplay moments rather than cut-scenes that, despite its weight and unrelenting presence throughout every aspect of the game, the story never feels like it's treading on the toes of the action. You may begin to think you know where *Enslaved* is leading you, but we would imagine that you're wrong. Again, Ninja Theory is far too subtle for that.

Elements such as the floating masks that only Monkey can see add a question mark to everything that follows, but thankfully all this is resolved by the end. There should be no loose threads for you by the time you finish


Trip is pretty naive about the world, but knows her tech.


Monkey's combat is fierce and very effective.

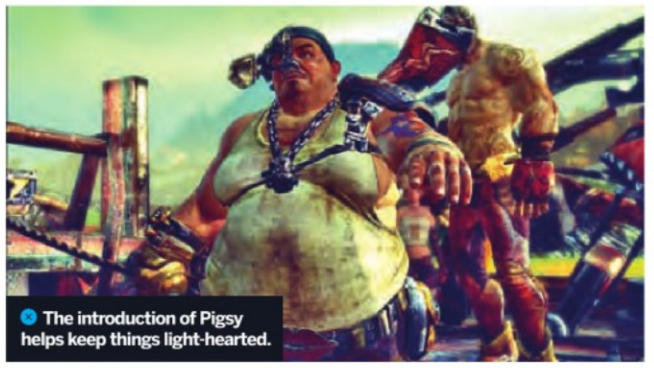
Or you could try



Heavenly Sword Issue 157
If this game was longer than six hours we'd give it a much better score. **71%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk





The introduction of Pigsy helps keep things light-hearted.



The mechs only get tougher as *Enslaved* continues.



Trip is pretty helpless against large mechs like this.

the game. The addition of a third character to the mix in the form of Pigsy couldn't be timelier either. As the story takes several turns for the worse, he adds some comic relief and a new dynamic to Monkey and Trip's relationship. His introduction also marks a shift into the endgame as events come to a head and new gameplay ideas are brought into play to spice up the final third. It's a good example of storytelling and gameplay being served at the same time, which *Enslaved* really seems to excel at.

The ending may leave some feeling a little flat. We can perhaps say that it is not as cathartic and victorious an ending as some would like. We'd rather not say too much more on that front for fear of spoiling things, but it could be considered a weak point in the overall experience. A centralising, nemesis figure might have helped ramp up the drama and sense of achievement come the finale, but we guess that wasn't Ninja Theory's wish. Your enemy is faceless, just like the hundreds of mechs you must fight to reach this unknown foe. Victory may be a little hollow, but the journey is not. Ultimately that's really the point. *Enslaved* didn't find inspiration in the classic Chinese tale *Journey To The West* for nothing. It's how Monkey and Trip get to their objective rather than what happens there that is really interesting. >

BEWARE OF DOG

One mech defines Enslaved's great story development



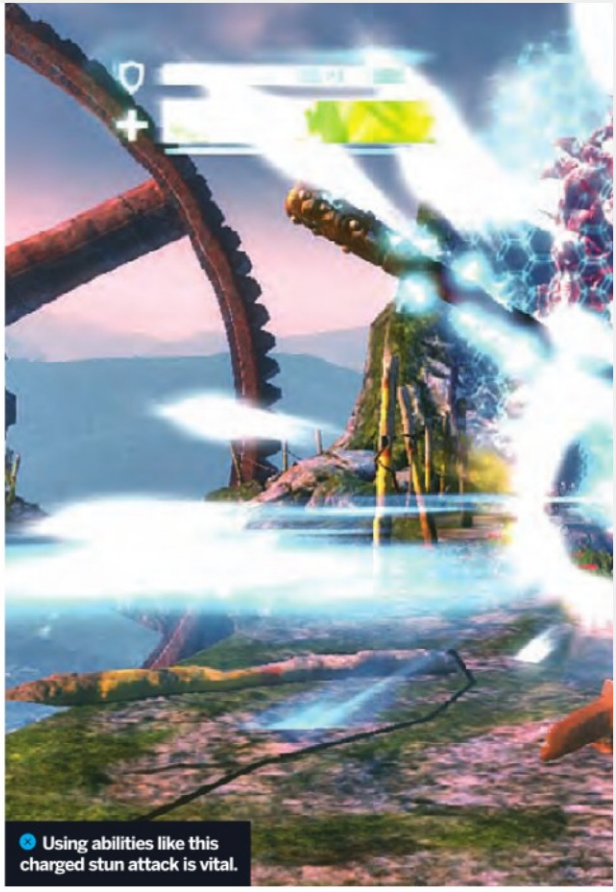
MONKEY AND TRIP'S encounters with the Dog mech are numerous and come to define both Monkey's growth as a hero and the strength of his relationship with Trip. When they first encounter the Dog in New York they run from it, knowing it will kill them. Later they work together to trap one so that Trip can find its weaknesses. This mech is built up as something to avoid, but there is a growing sensation you will have to face it to move on.

Finally Monkey has to stand tall and takes the Dog on using his Cloud to keep ahead of it. It's an uplifting moment in the game in that you have overcome great odds and it's also important in Monkey's character arc. Monkey had always thought himself stronger when alone, but thanks to Trip he's taken on a mech he would never have fought in the past. From here on their relationship has forever changed.

With the Dog defeated once, Monkey takes it on a couple more times later in the game, again in a one-on-one fight and later being the hunter rather than the hunted as a Dog chases Trip through a junk yard. This mech plays a big part in pushing these two characters together and it exemplifies how well Ninja Theory has weaved its plot into the game.



Pigsy's grappling-hook hand comes in very handy for getting around.



Using abilities like this charged stun attack is vital.

MONKEY VS NARIKO

We pit Ninja Theory's heroes against one another





Style

In terms of personal looks we have to go with Nariko on this one. Her flowing locks and loose-fitting robes really helped her stand out in a crowd and flowed beautifully once she started swinging her blades around. Monkey has that whole loner, biker look going on and it's not so much for us.

Combat

Nariko has all the moves in the world, but there's something about Monkey's no-nonsense brute strength with occasional flourishes that we really like. Nariko has more combo moves than you can shake a stick at, but Monkey shakes a stick and means it. We're simple folk, we like simple fighting.

Friends

Nariko seemed to surround herself with either insane, feeble or maniacally evil people. While Monkey's buddies may not always be the sharpest they are at least not completely loopy and can stand by him in a fight. Even Trip knows how to handle herself and Pigsy's always got his rifle.

Heroism

Monkey is the archetypal reluctant hero, thrown into a situation that he ultimately takes responsibility for. Nariko throws herself into her mission for revenge knowing it will likely kill her in the process. Kind of hard to pick those two motivations and journeys apart. That's a heroism draw.

Verdict

A narrow win for Monkey, but only because we're a bunch of brutes.

> But as we've said, for all that the story is the heart of what *Enslaved* is all about and what it has achieved, it never seems to be at the expense of gameplay time. Beneath a relatively simple top layer of combat and platforming you will find plenty of depth and features to explore. The first of these is the simple addition of collectables called Tech Orbs that feed back into the gameplay. These small glowing balls may not seem all that important as you find them floating around the game world and collecting them from fallen enemies, but once you start spending them on upgrades you begin to see how far the rabbit hole goes.

Monkey's health, shield, combat and staff can all be juiced up by Trip thanks to the Tech Orbs, but unless you collect an awful lot of them there's no way you'll max out any of his abilities in full without sacrificing your abilities elsewhere. Concentrating on health and shield improvements therefore makes a lot of sense, but that means perhaps putting up with reduced staff firing rate or melee attack power. We would certainly recommend unlocking the Focus Attack ability as early as you dare as this simple special move is great at getting you out of sticky situations and rewarding an aggressive melee approach. Once you start to see and feel the rewards of your orb hunting, collecting them becomes as much a part of the game as the combat or the story. Knowing that the Tech Orbs are often off the beaten path is also something to note. You may need to travel in a different direction or climb a different part of a building. *Enslaved* doesn't offer the most open world around and its path is usually a very linear one, but getting your mind caught in that path will actually cost you. You need to be able to think on your feet sometimes.

The same goes for the combat itself. With light attack on ▢ and heavy attack on △ you would be forgiven for thinking that button mashing alone will get you through the game. That approach may very well get you some way and with luck you could even complete

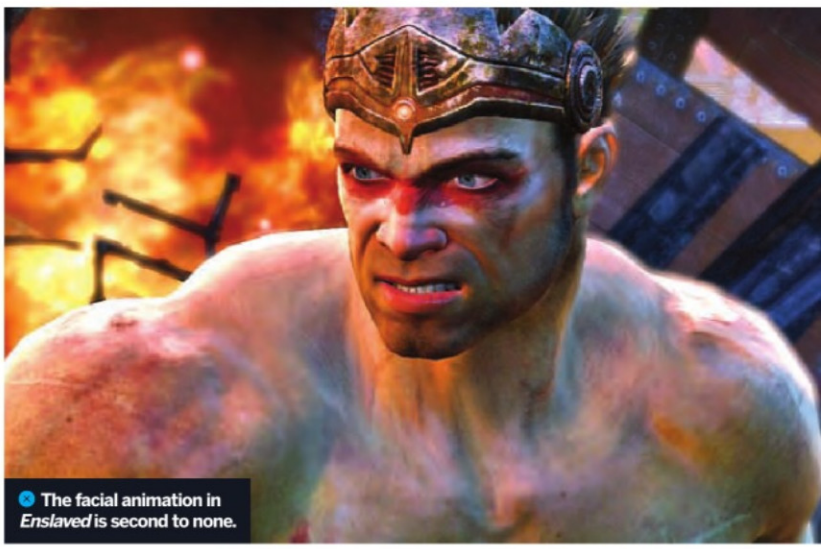




It was chase sequences like this that saw some compare *Enslaved* to *Uncharted 2*.



Even in a scrap yard like this the world is full of colour.



The facial animation in *Enslaved* is second to none.



Even *Enslaved*'s explosions are colourful.



The slave headband is what allows Monkey to see mech search areas.

the game that way, but greater satisfaction and ease of progress can be achieved by using the full arsenal of skills Ninja Theory has to offer you. By taking fuller advantage of the opportunities around you the combat becomes far more enjoyable and taxing.

Once Trip starts handing you information on mech weaknesses and you begin ripping gun arms off or creating EMP pulses by attacking the right enemy first, the tactical side of *Enslaved* comes into play. Knowing which mechs to attack first and which ones are the greatest threats to you is essential. *Enslaved* can be a tough game at times, especially when it throws four or five enemies at you simultaneously. That may not seem like a lot, but when all you have is a limited shield and a stick to fight with, that's plenty. Once you've upgraded yourself to perform the Focus Attack and Counter Attack moves you can really toy with the mechs and get some extra satisfaction from the close-up kill moves.

This is combat stripped of all the fancy moves and mechanics that clutter up many games. Ninja Theory's last game, *Heavenly Sword*, was testament to how developers can be bogged down in over-complicated gameplay mechanics. Sometimes keeping things simple gives the player more control and more impactful choices to make and so it is with *Enslaved*. Monkey is a straightforward character whose combat style matches his personality, but by being selective in the moves you perform, choosing and timing them wisely and using the space available to you, he can be just as graceful as Nariko was.

> Monkey is a straightforward character whose combat style matches his personality

But *Enslaved* isn't all about combat as Ninja Theory has attempted to make more of an action-adventure game than a hack-'n'-slasher, again moving away from *Heavenly Sword*. Climbing and platforming are also important areas of expertise for Monkey as he puts his name to good use. This is an area, though, that some will find a little underused and reveals in stark detail the level of linearity *Enslaved* uses to keep you moving >

Or you could try



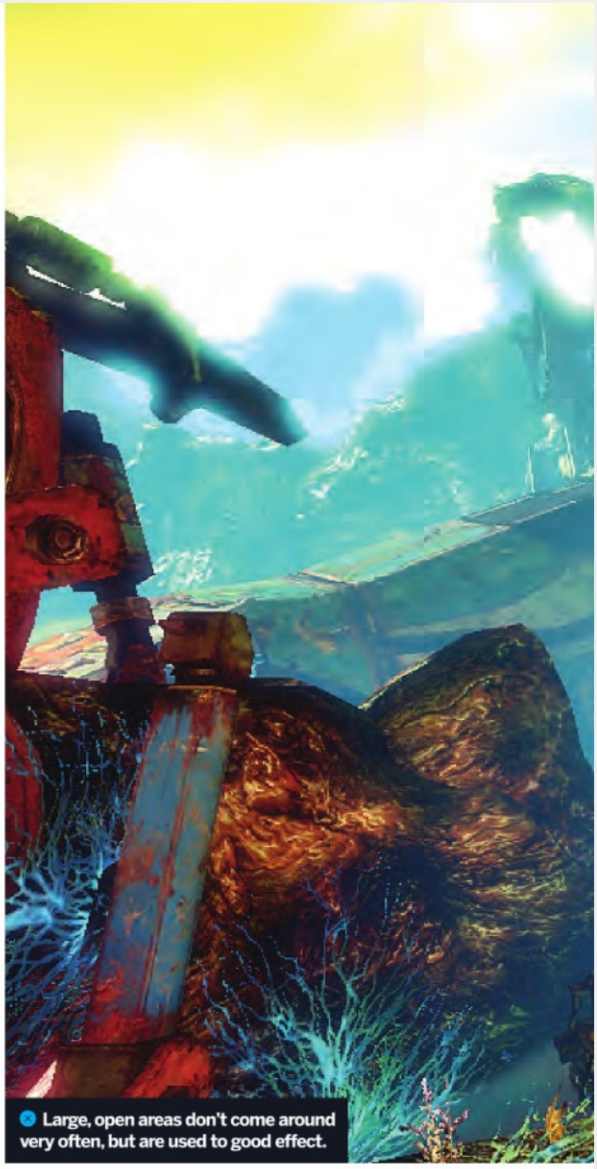
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves Issue 185
A real work of class. One of the best games of recent years. **96%**

> forward. The climbing mechanics aren't as sophisticated as you've experienced in *Prince Of Persia*, *Assassin's Creed* or *Uncharted*. They are simply functional. That's not to say that they can't be fun and sometimes even challenging when you're asked to be as fast and accurate as possible (climbing up a crumbling Brooklyn Bridge being a prime example). The issue is that *Enslaved* has been designed so you can't jump anywhere other than where you're supposed to. That removes a level of difficulty and annoyance that comes from these sorts of gameplay mechanics, but it also takes the fun out of path finding. On occasion, when looking for those Tech Orbs, you might find secondary routes that lead you to prizes, but ultimately the game only ever wants you to go in one direction.

What it does show off, though, is Monkey's superb animation, mostly handmade although obviously informed by the cut-scene performances of Andy Serkis. This is an area where *Heavenly Sword*'s development has clearly helped Ninja Theory push on into bigger and better places. Everything Monkey does is smooth and simple. Inspired by the athleticism of parkour athletes, he is as direct in his approach to crossing terrain as he is to knocking out mechs. Since path finding and accuracy aren't really an issue, what challenge there is in the platforming action of the game comes from being as smooth and timely in your actions as possible to make Monkey look his best. That may seem like an odd idea, but much like Ezio in *Assassin's Creed II*, making him look like the climbing god he is becomes half the fun.

Heavenly Sword's development has clearly helped Ninja Theory push on to bigger and better things

One area that might have done with some more time spent on it is the puzzles you are given. There's very little by way of difficulty to any of them in all honesty. What they do well, though, on several occasions is tie back into Monkey's core strengths of combat and climbing. Moving platforms around in a theatre, for instance, isn't difficult to work out, but requires a fair amount of leaping and ultimately pays off with important story advancement. Likewise, moving some tram cars around isn't too tricky, but leads to an interesting and intense chase and combat sequence. Anything too difficult would have slowed down *Enslaved* at key moments. It's a difficult balancing act that could have ruined the atmosphere and rhythm of the game if done incorrectly, so perhaps difficulty was sacrificed in the name of better pacing.



Large, open areas don't come around very often, but are used to good effect.



Cut-scenes and action blend in together seamlessly.



Tear off a mech's gun arm and you can use it for a time.

Which brings us to one of the real stars of the show, the world itself. Up close some of the textures aren't too pretty, but when you take a step back and just look over the tattered remnants of New York and beyond that Ninja Theory has created, it's hard not to be impressed. There's a level of colour and detail placed in this world that we wouldn't necessarily expect to see from something made using the Unreal Engine 3. Whether out in the streets or down in the depths of a mech factory, there is life and colour everywhere.

As you walk around first New York and later places further west you will see signs of the life before the wars and in-between. Posters on the walls speak of political troubles, graffiti tells the story of people turning their backs on their leaders. Abandoned chairs and bedding remind you that these places were once full of people who can no longer be found. There are many clues and hints to be seen all around you if you want to look for them and they all add to the atmosphere of the game.

While this may be a vision of the world that has seen humanity destroy itself with war and technology it is not a world of death. Life abounds here and that is perhaps another of *Enslaved*'s key story themes. Life will ultimately go on regardless, finding new ways to survive and cope. Monkey and Trip are from opposite ends of this new spectrum of humanity, but each of them just wants to survive and make the most of what life has to give them. It's a simple message and one handled with care. Thankfully, you

Previously... in Play
PREVIEWED Issue 196
"*Enslaved* is looking very good, with only some slightly loose controls holding it back from real greatness."



never feel like you're getting some social or political comment rammed down your throat. Anything you take away from *Enslaved* in that vein is something you've created for yourself.

Ninja Theory has clearly grown and improved as a developer with *Enslaved*, moving beyond what it achieved with *Heavenly Sword* to create a far more satisfying gameplay experience while also putting together a narrative that is completely engrossing. As we've said the acting in the cut-scenes is second to nothing else we've seen and as important as the story is to this game it doesn't happen at the expense of anything else. The ending may seem odd, but it will have you thinking (we hope) and it at least can't be accused of being obvious or unoriginal. More could have been done to make the combat, climbing and puzzling elements of the game more engrossing, challenging and varied, but none are so basic or stripped back as to lack interest.

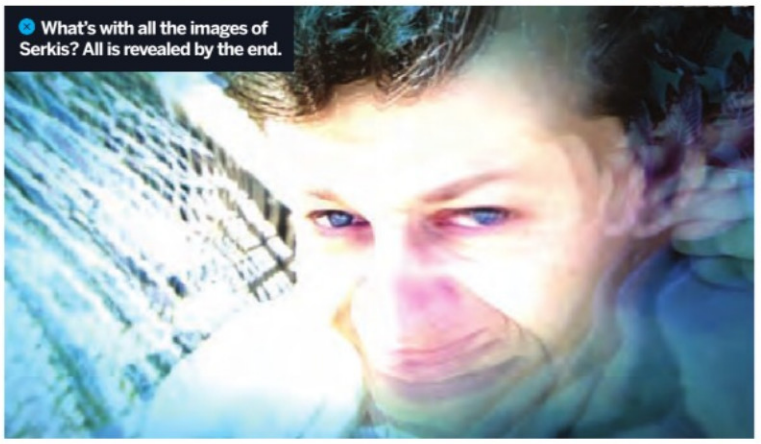
In the end if you're looking for a great story with solid gameplay and brilliantly realised characters then *Enslaved* is definitely worth checking out. Few games this year have been so vividly created or so well balanced. Ninja Theory's achievements should be lauded.

Jon Gordon

VERDICT

The ending may prove divisive, but thanks to some brilliant acting and well-balanced gameplay, Ninja Theory seems to have found the perfect storytelling formula. *Enslaved* is definitely worth your attention.

83%



What's with all the images of Serkis? All is revealed by the end.

CLOUD GAMING

Breaking things up with speed



MONKEY'S CLOUD IS one of the most fun elements of *Enslaved* and one that is used sparingly to make them feel as special as possible. When you're first introduced to the device you get to float around the East River for a while, leaping onto the debris left by the Brooklyn Bridge and generally having a bit of a lark. Later use of the Cloud can be a bit more fraught (in boss fights for instance), but the fun factor never really leaves it and its use is nicely spaced so that it never gets boring.



Taking on the Dog is a high point of the game.

RELEASE DATE: 1 OCTOBER

FIFA 11

PLAY classic award

More of the same, done a bit better. Unsurprisingly



DETAILS

Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Canada
Price
£49.99
Players
1-22
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
3
Website
www.fifa.easports.com

PS3 Look at the score. Now turn the page and look at the score there. That's all you really care about, isn't it? *FIFA* retains the title in the Which Is The Best Football Game On PS3 Championship. You can now stop reading, should you so choose, as you're already going to buy this, aren't you? For those who do want to read on, there will be some discussion of what features in this new *FIFA* game, just in case you were worried we'd fill it with 800 words of gibberish.

FIFA 11, sequel to *FIFA 10*, is better than its forebear. It's better than its competition. It's just better. Trying to pin down exactly why is a task no sane person would attempt, but we're known for being idiots here at **Play**. So let's see what EA has messed about with to make things that little bit better this time around.

Jostling and the physicality of the game has been improved to make things more lifelike and – at least in appearances – more fair. No longer will Aaron Lennon knock Sol Campbell five metres off the ball with a glancing body check. No, Sulzeer can stand his ground, position his body in the way and generally be the hulking oaf he is in real life. Smaller, less physical players do have some tricks up their sleeve, though, with improvements to the dribbling system helping the nippy little blighters emerge from encounters with the larger chaps unscathed – though only if you're good enough, of course.

> FIFA manages to retain the title in the Which Is The Best Football Game On PlayStation 3 Championship

This ranges from simply running *really quickly* past people with the minimal amount of skill (and we're back to Lennon) or, with more technically gifted players, transferring the ball from foot to foot to keep it as far away from the defender as possible, and attempting to position as much of their body in the way as they can while making their run. It isn't a perfect system and there are still a few issues with it – tiny men can still sometimes overpower the big lads – but generally speaking it's an improvement over last year's game for one very good reason: it lets you dribble with the ball.

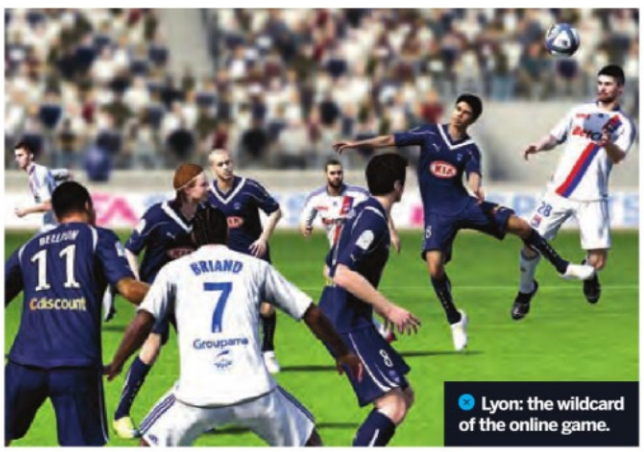
FIFA 10 did, of course, let you run around the park with ball at feet – we wouldn't claim otherwise – but it was a game that rewarded the player who would ping the ball back and forth across the pitch more than it did those who attempted skilful, flowing runs. Now there's more of a balance, as passing is now more skill-based, and it's harder to pull off pass-to-pass-to-pass moves – though not impossible. At the same time the improvements to dribbling make it a more attractive method of approaching the game. It offers up a great balance and broadens the appeal of *FIFA* to even more gamers, if that were even possible.

Then there's the presentation side of things, which now includes stat updates throughout the match for individual players, as well as faster, easier to navigate menu screens. Small touches, but *positive* small touches and the kind of thing *PES* still lacks hugely.

There are still nagging issues that will be familiar to *FIFA* stalwarts. Crossing is still far too ineffective to be a reliable strategy, meaning players who favour wing play (hello!) will find their technique neutered most of the time through no fault of their own. The advantage system is still a bit dodgy, meaning it can still be abused by the more nefarious players out there (as well as by the AI) – this is a part of the game in which *PES* triumphs, as Konami's game eliminated the 'little yellow man of shame' from the top-right corner of the screen seeing as players used him as an indicator to stop chasing the ball/lose possession for a cheap free kick. But other than a few niggles there isn't much wrong. We could launch into a rant on how these issues shouldn't persist and how we should dock the game 20 per cent for not addressing them, but that would be stupid. They don't break the




We're going to avoid all jokes about hookers here.


Lyon: the wildcard of the online game.

Or you could try



PES 2011 Issue 197
It'll have its fans, but it's just not as good as *FIFA*. **73%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk




Well at least *look* like you're enjoying it.

MAKE A CAREER OF IT

Because who wouldn't want £120k a week?

THE REVAMPED CAREER mode brings together previous Manager and Be A Pro modes under one umbrella. You can still just be an individual player or a manager if you like, but our favourite has to be player-manager, where you take control of a club *and* choose to play yourself up front every game. It's streamlined and nicely redesigned, and hopefully this time will avoid the bugs from previous versions that would end careers after about five seasons. You can also control keepers now, though in anything other than 11 v 11 online games this seems a bit pointless (and boring).






Nani and Evra have been hypnotised by Glen Johnson's amazingly average defending here.



game, they just irritate a bit – and even then, they only irritate a bit *sometimes*.

FIFA is still one of the most infuriating games ever made, though in the most satisfying way possible – something only footy games can manage.

FIFA 11 is better than *FIFA 10*, which was better than *FIFA 09* and so on and so forth. It's getting to be a situation where we can more or less repeat ourselves from the review of last year's game. How long this rise in quality can be maintained before we suffer series fatigue we do not know, but right now we seem to have hit the pinnacle of *FIFA* games so far. Until *FIFA 12*, of course.

Ian Dransfield


Mascherano prior to his tantrum.


Cech's helmet increases in visual fidelity with every passing instalment.


This guy's supposed to be quite good, so we've heard.

VERDICT

It's still baby steps improvement-wise, which is likely to annoy those who might be expecting more. But we're football fans, so we're more forgiving and a bit mental when it comes to these things: *FIFA 11* is the best football game on PS3.

91%

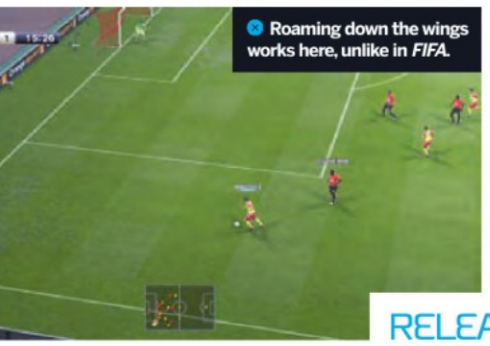
In this series



FIFA 2002 Issue 84
See? There was a time when *FIFA* wasn't great, too. **65%**




Free kicks are still... a bit weird.


Roaming down the wings works here, unlike in *FIFA*.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



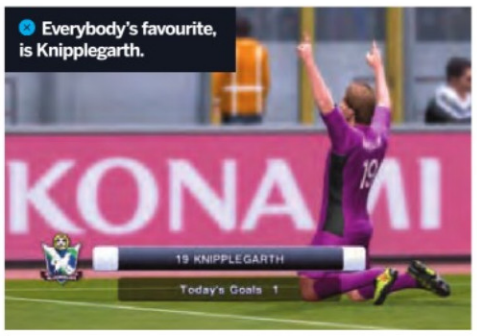
PES 2011

Will it be 'Winning Eleven' for Konami's football franchise?

DETAILS

Publisher
Konami
Developer
KCE Tokyo
Price
£49.99
Players
1-7
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
3
Website
www.pes2011.com

PS3 In *PES 2011* you have to press START to skip replays, celebrations, player cardings and so on. When it gets to half time, pressing START does not advance the action – the ⊗ button does. This isn't a problem, nor is it anything we're stressing over – it's just indicative of the game as a whole, and a fitting analogy for how the whole package has turned out. Basically, it's all a bit confused in itself, and lacks the consistency necessary to be a truly great game.



Everybody's favourite, is Knipplegarth.

Look at real football. Look at how the players will hoof passes all over the field, at different angles, heights and paces. And look at how – 90 per cent of the time – the receiving player will control the ball in two or less touches. They will not let the ball bounce off their legs, stick out a leg to control it, stop running while they adjust their body, then take a couple more touches just to be sure. This isn't some voodoo superpower instigated by unrealistic sporting videogames, as *PES 2011* seems to think – it's *how football actually works*. Seeing the ball cannon off Leo Messi's legs five times out of ten isn't just annoying, it's ridiculous.

> PES is capable of bringing back the old magic. It just isn't consistent

Issues with defensive AI will likely be the death of some of us in the office playing the game, as we scream ourselves hoarse at the defenders simply ignoring or running straight past the opposing player – or, of course, the classic 'forgetting the ball even exists' technique. If you ever leave it to the AI to do *any* defensive work for you then you're in for a rough time, as they only seem to want to attempt a tackle 20 per cent of the time. It's just plain wrong.

Passing – apparently reworked for *PES 2011* to make it more controllable by the player and more lifelike – errs far more on the side of 'broken' than it does 'not broken'. You will tap the pass button for the briefest of seconds only to see it cannoned at your nearby team-mate. You will hold the button for as long as you are allowed in order to play a long ball across the ground to a team-mate quite far away, only to see it *absolutely* cannon at, again, your nearby team-mate. There is



BECOME A LEGEND

Or: just don't bother

PES'S BECOME A Legend mode has had its issues over the years, and it looks very much like it's an area that hasn't seen much attention this year. There are still far, far too many problems with the mode to make it anything other than a pointless aside to the rest of the game. The inability to call for passes from your team-mates, how you can't encourage them to press for tackles (highlighting more of the woeful defensive AI) and how you generally end up running around for 90 minutes doing nothing on the pitch in most games – it's just not very good at all.



Or you could try 
FIFA 11 Issue 197
It's demonstrably better in almost every way. Get this instead. **91%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk





Spot the ball. Then note the direction Valdes is facing.

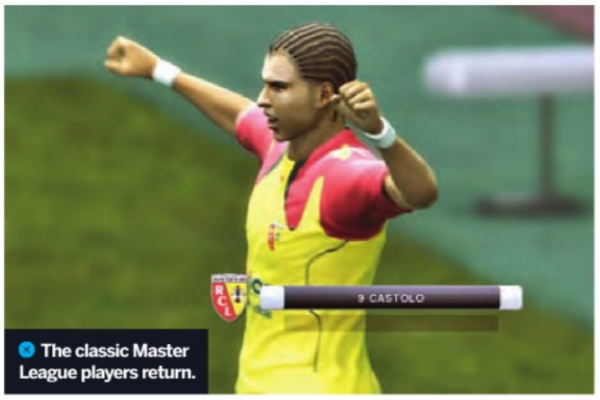


There are still moments to make you jump out of your seat.





Tactics can be mucked about with quite a lot, but it makes little difference.



The classic Master League players return.

the ability to pass the ball into open space and it certainly feels less regimented when it comes to individual creativity. But there are times when you expect the computer to do the thinking for you and not absolutely wallop the ball at someone stood less than a metre away from you.

There are times – sometimes – when *Pro Evolution Soccer 2011* does get it right. Gorgeously, wonderfully, *footballistically* right. That last-ditch cross from the touchline met by the Letchkov-channelling striker at the far post; the 40-yard 'you must be dreaming' punt that screams its way into the top corner (in off the crossbar, no less); the last-ditch tackle that couldn't be more last ditch unless it were literally the last ditch in existence. These moments exist, they happen and they remind you that *PES* is capable of bringing back the old magic. It just isn't consistent; the magic doesn't return for sustained periods – or sometimes at all.

Master League is still a fun distraction, and taking it online is a new direction for the mode we hope to see players take full advantage of. Taking your team from a bunch of two-bit nobodies to the champions of all things ever isn't something you can particularly get wrong, after all. But there's little we haven't seen before, and it's hard to get excited about a feature that is years old.

PES 2011 isn't a bad game, by any means, it just isn't a particularly good game. Judged on its own merits it plays a decent – sometimes good – game of football, but is let down at times by some confusing, lazy and downright irritating issues. In this regard it's a game we *can* recommend, but with some pretty serious caveats – it's a rental first and only a purchase if you decide that *PES 2011* is the football game for you. It's definitely better than *PES 2010*, but it's still lacking in far too many departments for us to demand you buy it without a second thought.

But when you don't judge the game on its own merits, when you take into account the fact that the *FIFA* series exists – which you have to, because it does – *PES 2011* becomes irrelevant. There are two real football games on the market right now, so it's always going to come down to a choice between the two. The Japanese offering is worse than the Canadian one. It's as simple as that, and it's as simple as a recommendation *can* come from us: if you're buying a football game this year, buy *FIFA* over *PES*.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

It's getting harder each year to cling onto the memory of *PES* being the best footballing game out there. *2011* does nothing to help jog those memories. As always, you can have fun, but as usual, it's not as good as *FIFA*.

73%

In this series



PES 2010 Issue 185
Not as good as *PES 2011*, neither are as good as *FIFA*. **72%**





RELEASE DATE: 8 OCTOBER



Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow

Vampire hunter: it's a great job if you can put up with the bosses

DETAILS
Publisher
Konami
Developer
MercurySteam & Kojima Productions
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action Adventure
Supports
720p, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
15
Website
www.konami.jp/castlevania/

PS3 What is it with boss battles? Why, oh why, is it *so* hard not to make them really annoying? The number of times we find ourselves saying, "Oh yeah, great game... awful boss battles, though" you'd think developers would have started to cotton on. If PlatinumGames can do boss battles that don't feel like a chore (see this issue's *Vanquish* review on page 70), why do so many other studios fail?

Studios including, in case you hadn't guessed, MercurySteam. The boss battles in *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow* are at best uninspired, at worst utterly infuriating. Why? Why, godamnit? Why spoil what is otherwise a beautifully put together game with such painful exercises in repetition and frustration?

We don't have the answer, but we can tell you that the boss battles in this game are mostly very samey, boring and annoying. We'll dwell on them no further, though, as we'd rather use the rest of this review to explain why it remains a worthy purchase all the same and how it always made us glad we persisted through its ropey bits.

Without wishing to sound like the sort of gamers who'll turn a blind eye to gameplay flaws when presented with great graphics, *Lords Of Shadow* looks beautiful. It's less about the technical quality, although that is excellent, and more about the art direction. The intricate detail on environments and characters surpasses anything we've seen before. It really feels like top-quality fantasy art come to life. And it's not just pure eye candy. The artwork has an important part to play in generating *Lords Of Shadow*'s powerful mood and atmosphere, as does the superb orchestral score. The game's world and story feel highly authentic and we quickly found ourselves drawn into the epic narrative and genuinely sympathising with the two heroic knights Zobek (Patrick Stewart) and player character Gabriel (Robert Carlyle). The script has the odd hiccup but is generally very good, and of course it doesn't hurt having a couple of seasoned pros in the lead roles.

> It really is a cut above your typical fantasy gaming fare

So yes, the reason we stuck out those annoying boss battles, and perhaps the reason we got especially annoyed with them, was that we really wanted to see what was coming next. What's the next realm going to look like? What new enemies will there be? How will the story develop? It really is a cut above your typical fantasy gaming fare.

There are two main types of fantasy fiction. The first is 'sword and sorcery', which is defined by *Conan The Barbarian*. It's all about boobs, blood, fire, magic and adventure for the hell of it. *God Of War* is sword and sorcery, *Lords Of Shadow* is not. It's high fantasy, which puts it in the category typified by *The Lord Of The Rings*. It's relatively serious, melancholy and sorrowful in tone, portraying a beautiful historical world under threat by dark, oppressive forces. While sword and sorcery is mostly for fun, high fantasy tends to explore deeper real-life themes through fantasy. This is something *Castlevania* does very well. It resonates just a little with real life.

But that's not to say it isn't fun. The combat, outside of boss battles, is very good indeed with a variety of enemies to face and techniques to master. The reason the combat, and the gameplay as a whole, doesn't get boring is that that *Lords Of Shadow* keeps introducing new elements to it. Combos and powers bought with XP will broaden your combat actions, while upgrades and relics found during the course of the story will be useful in both combat and exploration. By about halfway through the campaign, you have a wide range of skills at your disposal and they just keep coming.

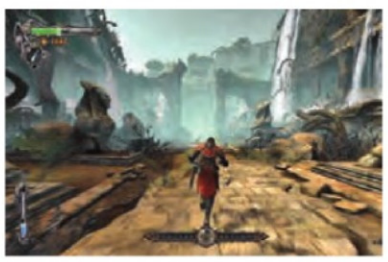
Aside from combat and bosses, you'll spend most of your time doing *Uncharted*-style platforming, exploration and puzzle-solving. *Castlevania* traditionalists might be

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

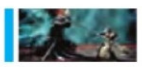
You'll want to stop and take pictures

THE REASON LORDS *Of Shadow*'s game world looks so good, apart from the sheer talent of the artists who created it, is that it is made from very few repeated objects or textures. Almost everything has been individually drawn then rendered and the effect is often breathtaking. It's for this same reason, by the way, that the Xbox 360 version has to come on two DVDs. All these objects are separate files and so use a large amount of memory. Plenty of room on a Blu-ray, though, of course, so you won't have to change discs on your PlayStation 3.





Or you could try

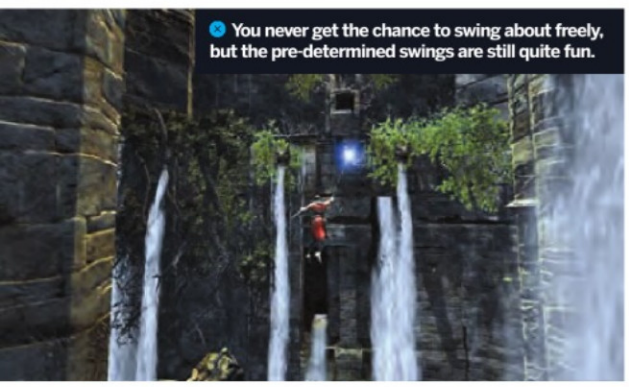


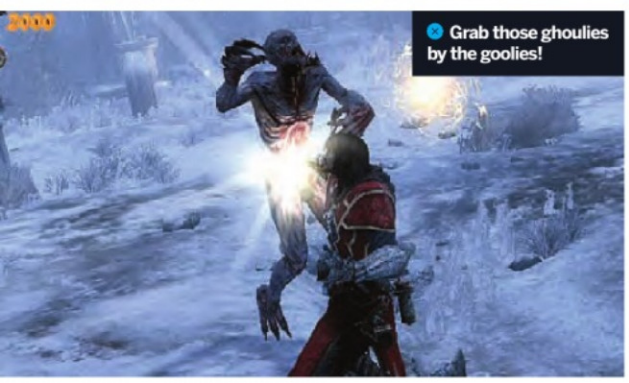
Dante's Inferno Issue 189
More focused on pure action than *Lords Of Shadow*, and a lot less subtle. **80%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk

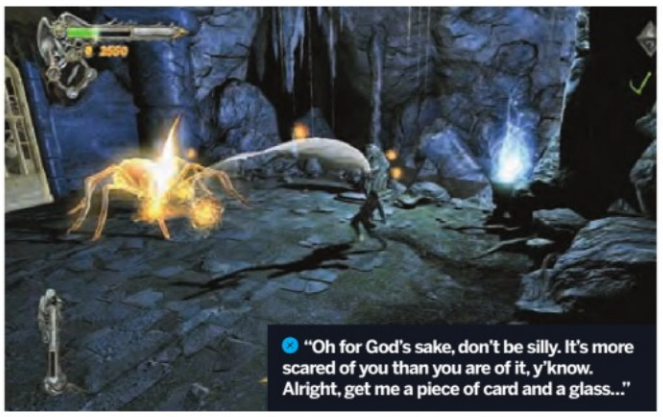



A Dark Crystal is a secondary weapon, which unleashes a demon that kills pretty much everything.


You never get the chance to swing about freely, but the pre-determined swings are still quite fun.


Grab those ghoulies by the goolies!


These aren't bosses, although some of the bosses are about this sort of size.


"Oh for God's sake, don't be silly. It's more scared of you than you are of it, y'know. Alright, get me a piece of card and a glass..."


Finding Zobek praying over the corpses of his fallen brothers is one of the darker, more poignant moments in the story.



a bit disappointed that the chain whip isn't put to a huge amount of use here, and that you can only hook it to a few pre-determined points. It's mostly still good fun, though, and some excellent level design means that, while none of the environments are particularly open, you always get a good sense of exploration. There were a few sections where we got a little lost and frustrated, but nothing annoyed us as much as those bosses.

So while it might have pushed us to our tolerance limit for tedious, generic, formulaic boss fights, we still came away from *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow* happy, impressed and wanting more. It might not be everything *Castlevania* purists would hope for, but fans of high-quality fantasy adventure will find it irresistible thanks to its impeccable production values and presentation.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

Exceptional presentation and an affecting, moody atmosphere help to compensate for some mixed game design. Highly recommended to fantasy aficionados.

85%

Previously... in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 196
"It's fairly traditional, mildly cheesy material, but it's handled with patience, subtlety and maturity."

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Dead Rising 2

New game, same fun, same problems (also zombies)



DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
Blue Castle Games
Price
£49.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Sandbox
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
18
Website
www.dead rising-2.com

PS3 We missed out on the original *Dead Rising* here in PlayStationland, late to the party as the PlayStation 3 was. What that means is we never really felt included in any memes about 'covering wars', we'd never dressed as a giant baby in a near-Lego helmet and we'd never annihilated tens of thousands of zombies in and around a shopping complex. *Dead Rising 2*, however, will make up for that fact. Mainly by being quite similar indeed to the first game.

The sequel follows a rather similar path to that laid out by its forebear: you are trapped in the midst of a zombie outbreak, and have to survive for 72 hours (game time, not real-time) until a rescue team arrives. Along the way you have to unravel the mystery of why your character, Chuck Greene, a former national motocross champion, was set up to make it look like he caused the outbreak, as well as rescuing dozens of survivors scattered around the Las Vegas-like town of Fortune City in multiple side-missions and – most importantly of all – making sure your young daughter receives a dose of Zombrex every 24 hours. For, you see, the little one has been bitten by a zombie at some point, and without regular Zombrex doses she will become the shambling dead. Guess which drug, beginning with the letter 'Z', is very rare, though?







It is, more or less, the perfect setup for a videogame. You are presented with a scenario, a way out of it, things to do along the way, a conspiracy to unravel and an emotional attachment to push you along. Which is why it's such a shame the whole package doesn't hold together terribly well.

By no means is *Dead Rising 2* a bad game, it's just an experience that rings quite hollow after only a few hours of play. Between the 23 cases you're given to play through – including the requisite Zombrex runs – there is a fair bit of downtime. Yes, you can occupy yourself exploring the area and rescuing survivors (or battling psychos) around the map, but you only ever have a few of these missions on the go at one time. Once they're gone, you're forced to wait it out until the next time-sensitive mission unlocks. This rigid structure may suit a lot of players, but it seems an odd choice to put something that remains so inflexible in a game that encourages so much mucking about.

> Dead Rising 2, when it hits its stride, is a hoot. It can raise a chuckle in just about any situation

But this is becoming overwhelmingly negative, and that's unfair. *Dead Rising 2*, when it hits its stride, is a hoot. It can raise a chuckle in just about any situation – not through clever writing or even particularly funny set pieces or characters, but through the fact you can play through the game dressed in an adult romper suit, wearing a





Previously... in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 186
"We got a very good look at the content and tone of Capcom's sequel and we enjoyed what we saw."




Blending the horrific with the ludicrous wonderfully.




This is what it's all about – saving your daughter. While being dressed funny.

ZOMBEASY

Trust us: you will feel cheated

ONE OTHER ELEMENT that holds *Dead Rising 2* back from being a truly great game is in the difficulty of the thing. We're all for hard games – we *adore Demon's Souls* – but *DR2* is a prime example of exactly the *wrong* kind of difficulty. While it's harsh enough to punish you properly for not keeping to the timescale, it's in boss battles against psychos that things get particularly horrible. Unblockable, unavoidable attacks, ridiculous speed, irritating knock-back attacks – they have every hallmark of bad design. It's the kind of thing that *will* put people off the game.







Sword, meet undead.







woman's hat and basketball sneakers. There are a lot of ridiculous elements to the game and it thrives in this ludicrousness. It is nothing but a benefit to the game that it has such a sense of humour, and it's things like this that will keep you coming back for more, even when you're convinced you've tired of the experience.

Combat – and combinations – are fun and satisfying, and mowing down a horde of zombies (sometimes literally) takes a long time to get dull. Countless objects that are strewn around the map can be combined to make seemingly innocuous items into deadly weaponry. Like a flashlight and a handful of gems, for example. It's a great system, even allowing you to experiment with your combinations before the game has actually awarded you with them, and the endlessly inventive contraptions you can create are testament to the ideology behind the game. Namely: messing about.

For those who played the original, the simple fact of the matter is this: if you did not like *Dead Rising*, you probably won't like *Dead Rising 2*. There are improvements to the formula, but generally speaking this is the same template again. There simply hasn't been enough done to the game to convince those who didn't enjoy it first time around to get into it on the second cycle. As the original was such a Marmitey experience, we get the feeling there will be a huge split in the audience between those who love everything *Dead Rising 2* does, and those who just can't get on board with it.

We're not going to say it's a disappointing game, but we definitely fall into the latter category. There are too many issues to wholly recommend it to any and all. It's possible to have fun – in fact, it's pretty easy to have fun – but it's maintaining levels of enjoyment, holding onto focus and offering an experience that doesn't feel stilted, old-fashioned in parts or even unfair where *Dead Rising 2* falls down. It's impossible to hate, but we found it very difficult to love.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

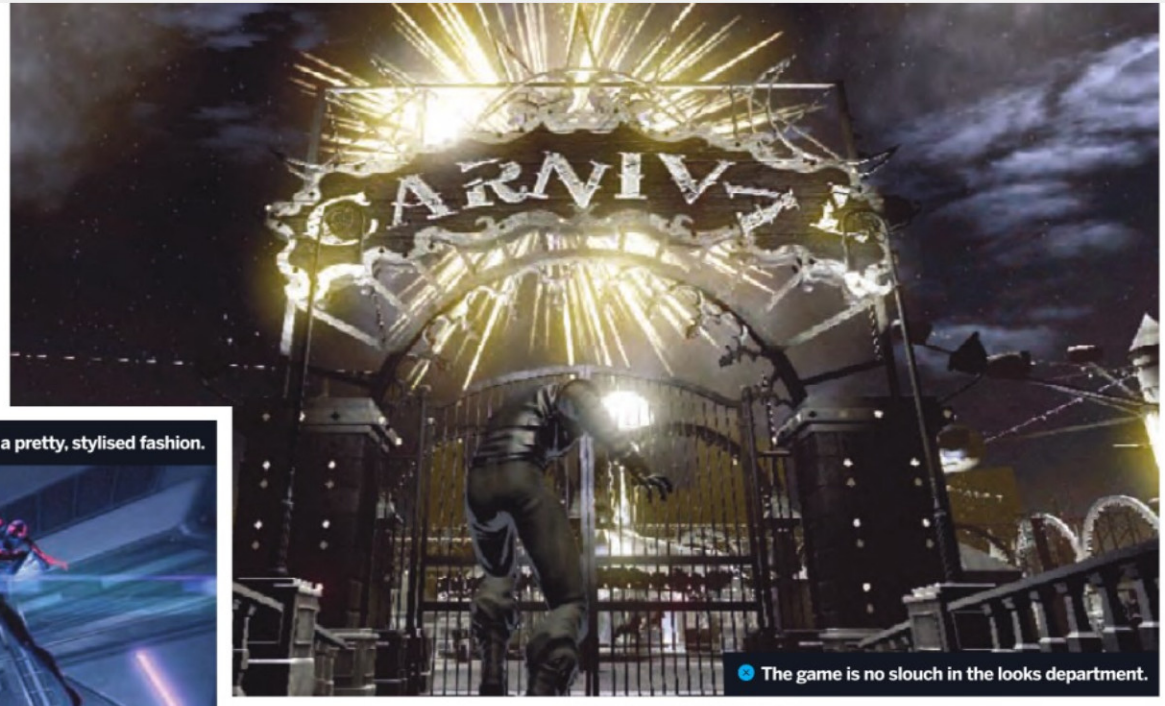
***Dead Rising 2* is great fun – when played for ten minutes and wading through zombies with a paddle-saw. When you play it properly, though, it falls apart. Frustrating, bloated and slightly stilted – it's fun, but not revolutionary.**

78%

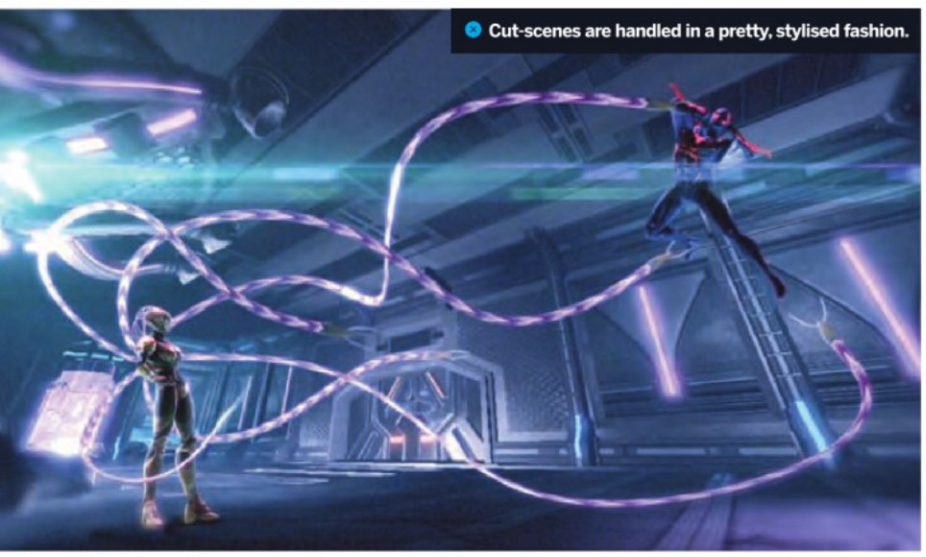
Or you could try



Red Faction: Guerrilla Issue 180
Minus zombies, plus Mars and destruction. Great sandbox fun. **80%**



The game is no slouch in the looks department.


Cut-scenes are handled in a pretty, stylised fashion.


Deadpool, as voiced by... sigh... Nolan North (he's quite good, though).



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions

DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
Beenox
Price
£49.99
Players
1
Genre
Action adventure
Supports
720p, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
12
Website
http://spidermandimensions.marvel.com/

Spider-Man (x4) does whatever a spider can (x4)

PS3 *Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions* is a game as schizophrenic as the four Spideys it portrays in the adventure. One second it's fun, free and flowing combat, punishing enemies with hundred-plus hit combos and generally messing about lobbing items at enemies – as well as enemies at enemies.

The next you're wrestling with a camera that simply won't pay attention to what you want it to do, adversely affecting controls (especially when wall-crawling) and generally reminding you of all the problems you've seen in previous *Spider-Man* games.

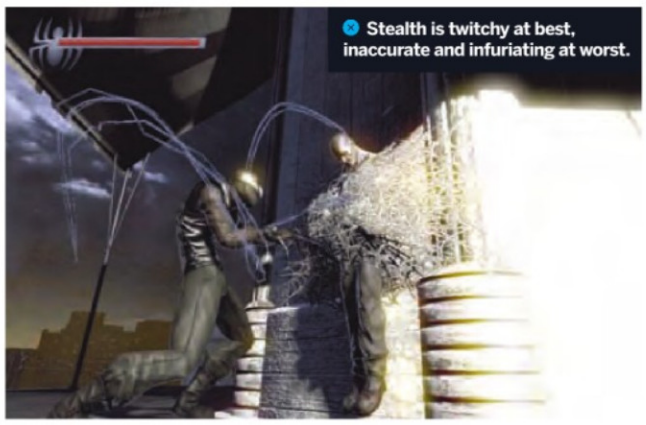
One minute it's chucklesome and interesting, with a few decent boss encounters and a really rather good level in the shape of Deadpool's gameshow. The next minute it's strictly derivative, or harking back to a time when stealth was an alien concept to games and would randomly punish players for a reason they could never be expected to fathom. We're looking squarely at you, Spider-Man Noir, with your enemies who don't react to the guy *stood next to them* being yanked away, who can suddenly pick out a headshot on Spidey from 500 metres away because the superhero accidentally puts one toe out of the shadows.

As you can probably see, we're not too enamoured with *Shattered Dimensions*, but we're also finding it hard to really lay into it. What it sets out to do, it does well enough – there's nothing that will take you by surprise or offer up anything you haven't seen before. You can upgrade your collection of Spider-Men, boss battles are all about learning patterns and missions rotate between attack, pursue, fall, climb or defend. But then, it's playable and enjoyable, so what does that matter? We don't demand absolute originality from every game.

What we do demand, though, is a fully functional experience that doesn't have problems we haven't seen much of in games for the last few years. Camera issues of this magnitude make us angry. Not allowing full control of your character in certain situations – balancing on beams, for example – makes our blood boil. The inability to accurately target where you want Spidey to swoop up to, though – that's unforgivable. It doesn't break the game, but it does make it far, far more cumbersome than it has any right to be, and it leads the game down a very dark path indeed.

Ian Dransfield

> As you can probably see, we're not too enamoured with Shattered Dimensions


Stealth is twitchy at best, inaccurate and infuriating at worst.



Spidey 2099 does a lot of this falling lark.

VERDICT

A game of four quarters, fittingly: one fun, one uninspired, one interesting and one broken. It's easy to switch your brain off and have fun with Spidey, but there's a bit too much wrong to really recommend it.

69%

Or you could try


Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands Issue 193
One per cent worse than *Shattered Dimensions*, whatever that actually means. **68%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Quantum Theory


Cover, shoot, snore, repeat.



DETAILS

Publisher
Tecmo Koei
Developer
Team Tachyon
Price
£49.99
Players
1-10
Genre
Third-person shooter
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
16
Website
www.quantumtheorygame.com

Here's a simple theory: This + Game = Bad

PS3

"It's *Gears Of War* for the PS3!" some people may have said – and we may have been a part of them. Fortunately, we can now reply, "no, it isn't! It's just a really bad game that happens to liberally take a few elements from Epic's Xbox 360 shooter and sprinkle them through its own haphazard, half-hearted dump of a game!"

We would rather recommend that you go out and buy an Xbox 360 and a copy of *Gears Of War* than we would recommend you bother even giving *Quantum Theory* five minutes of your time. After all, time is a precious commodity that should not be wasted, and playing *Quantum Theory* is so bad it's actually an *insult* to wasting time.

Let's start with the easiest target – the looks. Main character Syd is a confused mishmash of design styles and is, sometimes, interesting to look at. But then you remember the fact his character model wouldn't be out of place on a PS2. Then you glance at your surroundings and see they're either completely lacking in detail or just washed out, muddy and downright *ugly*.


The 'look' function is 80 per cent useless.



Blindfiring is far too accurate.

Another element coming under the presentation banner is voice acting: guess how that turns out?

The game itself takes the notion of cover-based shooters to the extreme, with every single encounter being a godawful blast over, under and around random structures in your way that you struggle to get behind – so unresponsive are the controls.

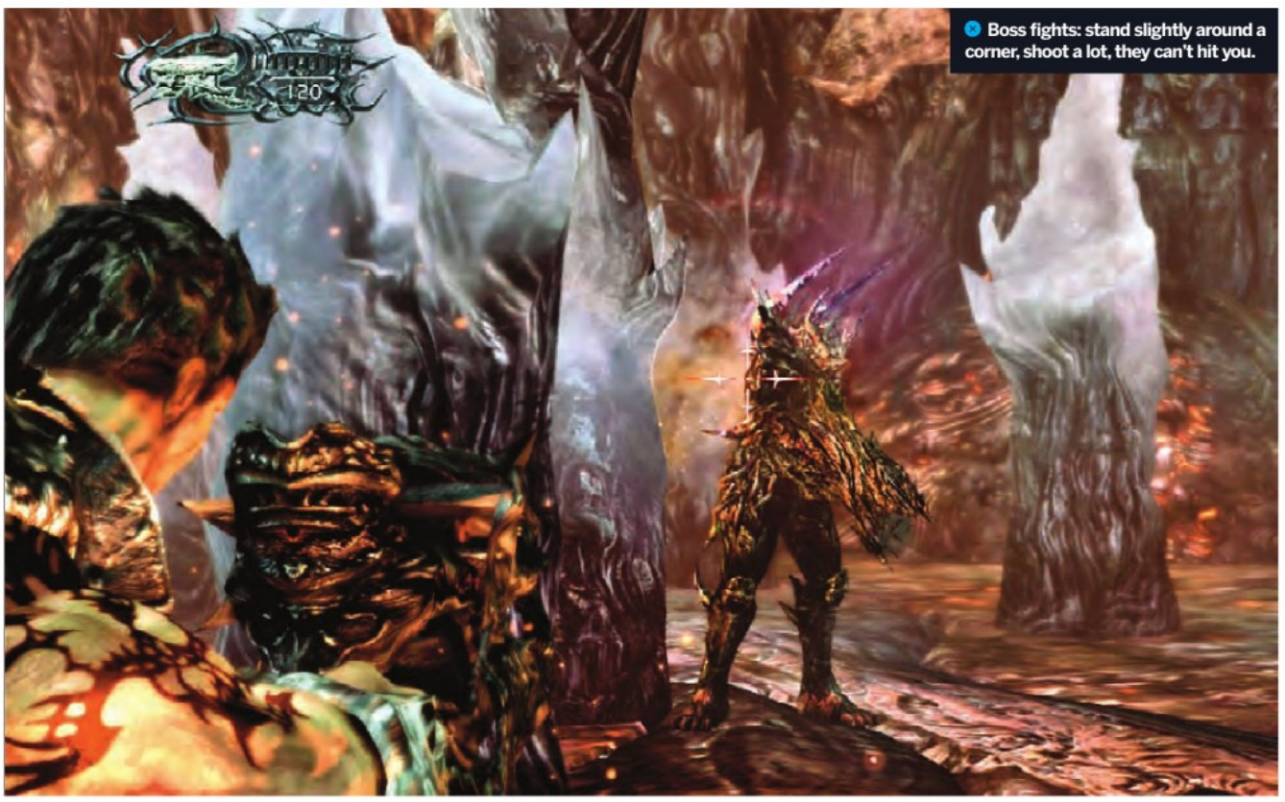
> Playing Quantum Theory is so bad it's actually an *insult* to wasting time

"But wait!" you argue, "the game is set in a living building where cover moves around organically!" Well, yes, apparently it does. Though you will play the game for hours and not see any. And when you do you will brush it off and forget about it like the pathetic gimmick it is.

What else makes *Quantum Theory* such a turgid excuse for a game? Well, aiming is twitchy to the point that it's plain inaccurate, your character is unable to walk up a gentle slope, prompts attempting to show you where to go next usually end up with the camera focusing on a wall, AI is diabolical with enemies blowing themselves up or just standing still out of cover and there are a few too many sections where insta-death will come at you with no warning. And this is nowhere near a complete fault list.

Awful.

Ian Dransfield


Boss fights: stand slightly around a corner, shoot a lot, they can't hit you.

VERDICT

***Quantum Theory* is bland, ugly, boring, shamelessly derived from *Gears Of War* and with very little in the way of redeeming features. We will warn you, and we will warn you once: do not bother with this game.**

29%

Or you could try


Uncharted 2: Among Thieves Issue 185
Treat yourself to something both good and worth playing. **96%**





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

F1 2010

The best Formula 1 game for years, but...



DETAILS

Publisher
Codemasters
Developer
Codemasters
Price
£49.99
Players
1-12
Genre
Racing
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1, steering wheel controller
Age Rating
3
Website
http://formula1-game.com/

PS3 What is it with the cockpit view? People are obsessed. At regular intervals throughout our time spent playing *F1 2010*, co-workers would pop into the room to take a look, and absolutely all of them asked the same question first, "What's the cockpit view like?"

And we never really knew how to answer. It's like... er... the inside of the cockpit. What more do you need to know? We don't really understand the question. But the fact that so many people asked tells us that it must be important, and now we feel under pressure to provide some sort of satisfactory answer here in this review. So we'll try harder...

We didn't use the cockpit view much because it's not our preference, but when we tried it, it looked really good although there was this thing sticking up out of the nose of the car, which got in the way a bit but is on the car in real life, so there you go. Hopefully that will suffice.



Driving in the wet is *much* harder, but the water effects look fantastic.



It's fairly easy to gain a few places at the start. Holding your focus for the next six laps is the tricky bit.

Regardless of what view you use, *F1 2010* looks absolutely gorgeous. Cars and tracks are incredibly well detailed, and the lighting and weather effects are superb. What really impressed us as well, was how each track wasn't just a different layout of tarmac – they all really feel like different countries with their own individual atmosphere.



They could have made the off-track stuff more fun, by letting you have a go on that big wheel.



The visuals are accompanied by excellent sound and matched by brilliantly well-balanced handling and physics. The cars feel just right, without being too fussy and strict with the finer points of simulation. This is still a very tough, hardcore game, though, even on the easier settings. Like all recent Codies racing sims, it features Flashbacks that allow you to rewind and retry after an error during a race, but even with those taken into account, it can feel very unforgiving, especially in wet conditions, which greatly increase the difficulty.

While the on-track action is difficult to fault, the off-track content in the career mode feels very half-baked and, rather than making the experience more involving and compelling, just seems to slow things down and get in the way. There are some nice ideas, such as earning car upgrades by beating target times in practice, but then there's also some sort of levelling-up system, which doesn't seem to have any point to it at all. With a better career mode this could have been a must-have for racing gamers with or without an interest in Formula 1. As it is, fans of Formula 1 will adore it while the rest of us might not have our interest held for that long.

> While the on-track action is hard to fault, the off-track content just seems to slow things down

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

On-track, this is the best F1 simulation ever seen in a game, there's no question of that. But the career mode, while dotted with fan-serving details, feels incomplete and could struggle to keep all but the hardcore F1 follower motivated.

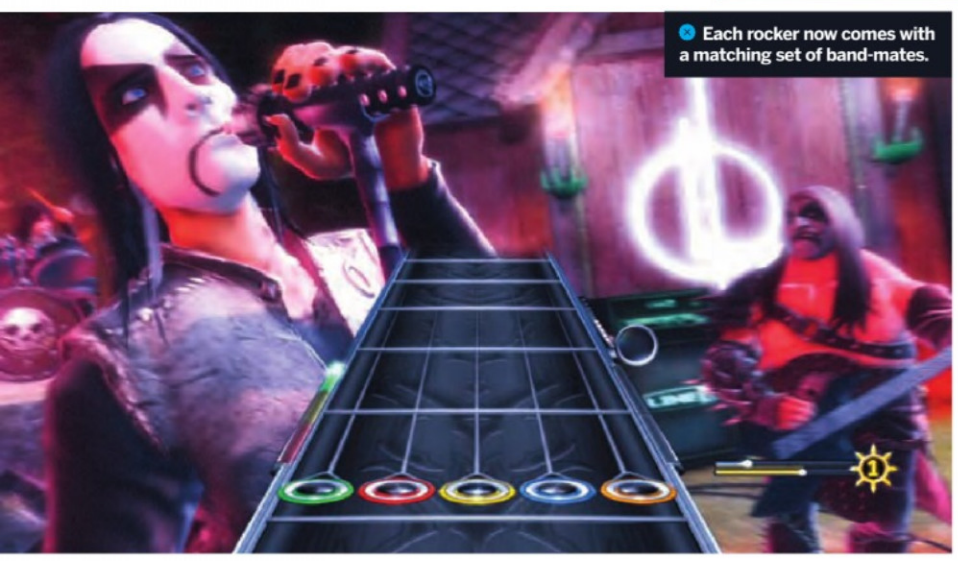
86%

Previously... in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 192
"The racing itself promises to look and feel more realistic than any F1 game that's gone before."

www.imagineshop.co.uk



Each rocker now comes with a matching set of band-mates.





Some of the song-specific animations are quite good. *Bohemian Rhapsody* had us in stitches.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock

DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
Neversoft
Price
£49.99 (game only)
Players
1-4
Genre
Party
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, Dolby Digital 5.1, guitar, microphone, drums
Age Rating
12
Website
http://hub.guitarhero.com/games/ghwor

While our guitar gently weeps

PS3 Shortly before E3, Neversoft told us that as the market for its music games has shrunk, it has become more hardcore, with the last few iterations of *Guitar Hero* mostly being played on Hard and Expert difficulty. For this reason, the plan was to go back to the series' roots with *Warriors Of Rock*, aiming squarely at hardcore *GH* players and hardcore rock fans. This all put a big smile on our face because, basically, that's us.

But if we really were at the heart of Neversoft's target audience for this game, then it missed by a mile. Why, if you were targeting the core of your existing fan base, would you start screwing around with the fundamental mechanics of the game?

Exhibit A: Quest mode. We like the idea of an epic, rock-themed quest, which is why we enjoyed *Brütal Legend*, but it's been done wrong in almost every respect here. The one thing that is really cool is the look of it. The Warrior Rocker forms and outlandish gig venues give the game a welcome injection of fantasy, but it's just a tasty bit of icing on a cake that hasn't risen.

The biggest problem is the Powers. Each character has a different one, and all of them do nothing except upset the balance of the game. Casey Lynch's, for example, automatically shields your streak if you drop a note, so the satisfaction of acing a tricky solo with that particular character on Quest mode is rendered hollow. Other Powers add bonuses to multipliers and such, and the overall collective effect they have is that Star Power is almost constantly either on or ready. So Star Power isn't special in Quest mode. Neversoft hasn't even bothered including Star Power animations in this game either.

Quickplay+ mode is better as there's no Powers and you can unlock a lot of content through it (although not songs, you *have* to play Quest for them), but it's still hampered for us by having Hard mode made easier. So much for aiming at the core audience. If you mostly preferred playing on Hard before, you will now find yourself caught in the void between Hard being mostly too boring and Expert being mostly too difficult, and neither being much fun.

> The track list is okay and the new guitar peripheral is brilliant

Other than that, the track list is okay and the new guitar peripheral is brilliant – the best released for the PS3 so far. Next time, though, please drop the gimmicks altogether and divide Hard difficulty into two halves. Please.

Gavin Mackenzie



The Quest mode cut-scenes don't really tell a story, they're just fancy entrance moves.



VERDICT

All it needed to be was the familiar *Guitar Hero* experience with some fun new songs, but no... This is the least fun we've had with *Guitar Hero* for a long time.

71%

Or you could try



Brütal Legend Issue 185
If you really want to embark upon a quest for rock, then this action adventure is way better for the purpose. **79%**

PlayStation Move

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

R.U.S.E.

Managed to get a ruse out of us



Who do you think you are kidding, Mr Hitler?



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Eugen Systems
Price
£49.99
Players
1-8
Genre
RTS
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3, Move
Age Rating
16
Website
www.rusegame.com

PS3 It is a long-known fact in gaming that real-time-strategy games just don't work on consoles. Blame the power of the mouse and keyboard, if you must, but almost every attempt to move army commanding away from its natural habitat on a PC monitor falls by the wayside. And *R.U.S.E.* would be exactly the same, if it wasn't for Sony's shiny, new Move controller. Players with a traditional controller may well become frustrated by the stickiness of the controls or lack of speed, yet with the motion controller everything becomes as simple as pointing at the screen.

But first of all, to the game's nuts and bolts. As expected, the staples of strategy games are all present and correct: construct bases, collect money, build soldiers, attack. Repeat to win. You will begin the campaign – as in so many other RTSs – with limited unit types while you're drip-fed new abilities and troop types. For the majority of time you'll be playing a wartime variation of rock-paper-scissors, being careful to keep an eye out for certain enemy types and countering with the correct opposing forces. That's not to say there isn't an element of depth to *R.U.S.E.*, however. Without backing infantry, for example, anti-tank artillery are vulnerable to almost every attack, meaning you're better off moving in packs.

R.U.S.E. is one for RTS aficionados, rewarding pre-planning and tactical play

Deception, of course, is the key point of *R.U.S.E.*, which is achieved by applying the aptly named abilities, known as 'ruses'. Each one has a specific effect, which can be used at any time and applied to any of the map's zones. The choice is left to you: which ruse to use as well as when and where to use it. It is a gimmick, but one that works well enough to really give you an advantage. Radio Silence, for example, will make all of your units in a zone disappear off the enemy's radar, allowing them to move undetected, but combine this with Blitz and your army will travel 50 per cent faster – giving you an immediate yet invisible assault.



War Room view highlights how small a part you are playing in the war.




The IrisZoom engine lets you really get up close and personal to your units.



The minimal storyline is detailed in cut-scenes, which mostly involve people gabbing.


We're the blue ones. That's right, the ones with only four light tanks...

All the parts are in place for a solid strategy title, with *R.U.S.E.* taking the slower, more thoughtful side of the scale and really giving you the feeling of control over a smaller set of forces in a larger battle. Players with Move, however, will automatically own the better version of the game, with the motion control becoming intuitive almost instantly. Setting up ambushes, building units and structures and issuing orders across the map are simplified, only highlighting the problems with a traditional controller. It is one for RTS aficionados, though, rewarding pre-planning and tactical play, meaning it's likely that the inherent flaws with controller-play are happily overcome.

Adam Barnes

VERDICT

It's pretty rare to see an RTS on a games console, let alone one that doesn't rely on tank rushing. Nevertheless, *R.U.S.E.* is a solid strategy romp and well worth any strategy fans' time.

82%

Or you could try

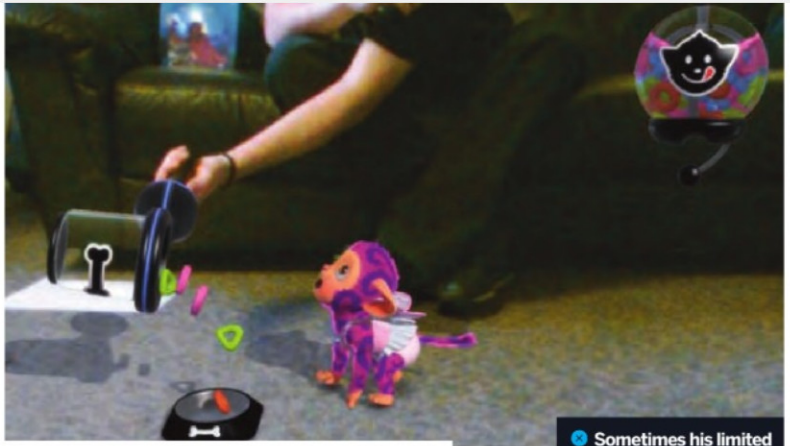


Tom Clancy's EndWar Issue 173
Limited control over points of view mars an otherwise memorable RTS. **80%**

www.imagineshop.co.uk



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



Sometimes his limited AI is part of his charm.



This should give you an idea of how easy it is to draw accurately with Move.

EyePet: Move

You can teach an old pet new Moves

PlayStation Move

DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Sony London Studio
Price
£19.99
Players
1
Genre
Party
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1, PlayStation Move
Age Rating
3
Website
www.eyepet.com

PS3 If you want to read a more detailed review of what *EyePet* is all about, then check out **Play** issue 185, or go here: http://ps3.nowgamer.com/reviews/ps3/8729/eyepet. This review is all about what differences it makes now that *EyePet* can be played with the PS Move controller. If you have the game already, there's a free update to allow you to play it with Move and if you don't, *EyePet: Move* is suitably cheap, so we're not going to argue that there aren't enough new features for a re-release.

There aren't many new features and Move doesn't make a huge difference, but it's still a slightly better game with Move. You do use your hands for a lot of the activities, though, and that's just the same as ever. Move adds a few new toys, the ability to draw directly onto the screen rather than scanning drawings off endless sheets of paper, and it makes most of the tools look more lifelike in your hand than before. Some of them function a little differently, too, using the Move's trigger to activate them, rather than the automatic or timed activation of the original game.

> It's still as fun, endearing and charming as ever, but Move won't add much

It's still as fun, endearing and charming as ever, but Move won't add much to its depth or longevity, so think of it as a short-term distraction for kids rather than a pet for life.

Gavin Mackenzie



The fan is a new toy. It's fun blowing EyePet over with it, but the novelty wears off fast.

VERDICT

Pretty much the same game, only a bit better with Move. It's cute and loveable, just don't expect it to last long or to really showcase the very best of what Move can really do.

84%



RELEASE DATE: 8 OCTOBER

WRC: FIA World Rally Championship

Rallying via the traditional route

DETAILS

Publisher
Black Bean Games
Developer
Milestone
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Racing
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3
Age Rating
3
Website
www.wrcthegame.com

PS3 This is Milestone – developer of the *Superstars V8* series – having its first crack at a rally game this generation, and the results are quite promising. The studio doesn't present *WRC* in the same way as competitor *DiRT 2* does, meaning this is a far more traditional, sober representation of rally driving – harking back to the *Colin McRae* games of old.

As such it might not appeal to the young 'uns who are looking for thrills and, obviously, spills, but it has everything – the licence, the cars, the tracks and the drivers – that makes the enthusiast happy.

But what about us everyday gamers? Well, we're catered for through a more than functional – we'd go so far as to describe it as 'good' – driving system. Physics take a while to become attuned to, but seem spot-on once you get into the flow. While the game is quite hard, it never quite feels like you're being punished unfairly and it is very easy to accept that you weren't actually listening to your co-pilot when you went off the side of that cliff.

> This is a far more traditional, sober representation of rally driving

While the core is solid, *WRC* is lacking elsewhere. A full career mode can eat up a chunk of your playing time, but there really isn't as much variety as there is in the aforementioned *DiRT 2*. Constant rewards will keep you playing, but all in all it's Codemasters who still hold the crown with the better game.

Ian Dransfield



In-car is easily the best way to play the game.



The Dran-mobile. Ignore crash-marks. Someone else did that. Ahem.



This may look under control. It isn't.

VERDICT

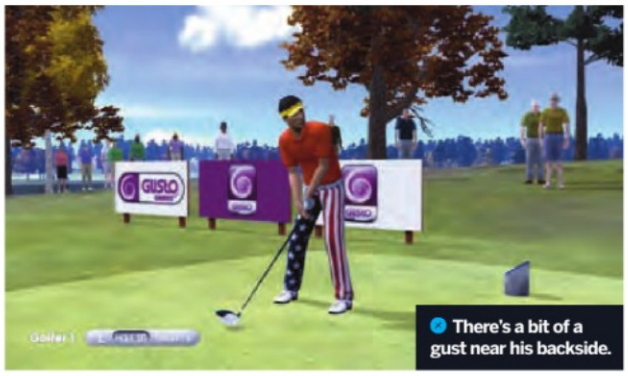
***WRC* is a solid, if unspectacular title. You'll already know if you're interested in it, but even if you're not – and if you're not taken with the bombastic, Americanised nature of *DiRT 2* – it's worth at least a rental.**

76%



DETAILS

Publisher
O-Games
Developer
Gusto Games
Price
£44.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3, PlayStation Move
Age Rating
3
Website
http://bit.ly/do0YDJ





RELEASE DATE: 8 OCTOBER

John Daly's ProStroke Golf

Tiger gets a new challenger – The Lion

PS3

You should play *John Daly's ProStroke Golf* with Playstation Move – it's been built from the ground up with the motion controller in mind and it shows. This plays one of the closest approximations to golf we've yet seen in a game, with intuitive, natural use of Move and... well, you have to put *effort* in to hit the ball hard. Which is fun.

Take away Move and what are we left with? A game that offers some competition to the *Tiger Woods* series, but only in that there are elements different between the two games and because... well, it *exists*.

Without the novelty usefulness of Move, the faults with the game become more apparent – poor quality graphics, commentary that doesn't match up to the action, the chore of having to face off against Daly to unlock single-player tournaments, Daly's voiceover work being subpar (that's being kind) and the general feeling of inaccuracy with the pad controls, thanks to a lack of real feedback on your shots.



Move is integrated well, so a few plus points for that. But without the impressive controls we're left with a rather empty experience. It lacks the personality we would've hoped for from a game based on Daly and generally plays a very standard – if not more in-depth than what we're used to – game of golf.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Not a great opening salvo from Tiger's new challenger, but impressive Move implementation means it's one to watch in future. *Everybody's Golf* is still the reigning champion of PS3 golf games, though.

70%



DETAILS

Publisher
THQ
Developer
Yuke's
Price
£29.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Sports
Supports
Ad-hoc Wi-Fi Multiplayer, TV In/Out
Age Rating
15
Website
www.ufcundisputed.com

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

UFC Undisputed 2010

Platinum game of the month award PSP

Now you can beat people up on the bus

PSP

It's kind of traditional now for THQ to take one of its yearly franchises and port it to the PSP, resulting in a slightly inferior, though still decent handheld version of the bigger brother game. And it's exactly the same with *UFC Undisputed 2010* on the PSP.

Basically, apply any of the issues that plague the PSP versions of *SmackDown Vs Raw* when compared to the PS3 versions and you have your exact description for *UFC* as well. Long loading times, control issues and a general feeling that things are a little bit empty.

It looks the part, though, with some nice visuals, and when you get your head around switching between analogue and digital controls to mix up clinches, footwork and takedowns then there is still a deep and rewarding fighting system backing it all up – just as in the PS3 version.





Features-wise *UFC* hits the right notes, offering a full career mode, an in-depth create-a-fighter system and a few championship runs (just watch out for the strap match, as the game jacks up the difficulty) – basically there's enough here to keep you playing for quite a while.

While lacking commentary, it is presented well and all in all it's recommended for PSP-owning fans of MMA.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

There's little point in buying this if you own the PS3 version, unless you really must play *UFC* games wherever you are. It's still a neat little package, though, offering everything you need from a portable brawler.

80%

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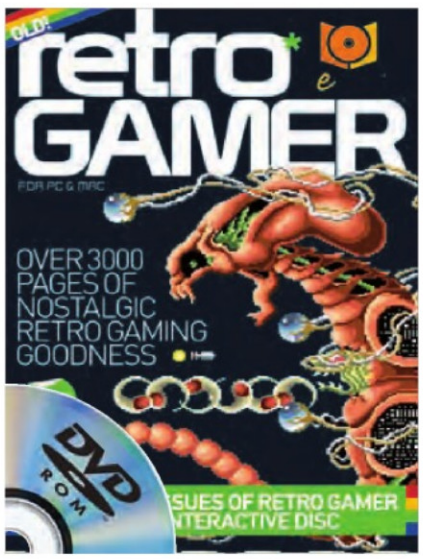
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Showcasing games that shaped a generation, this book features the greatest games for all consoles and PC platforms of all time.
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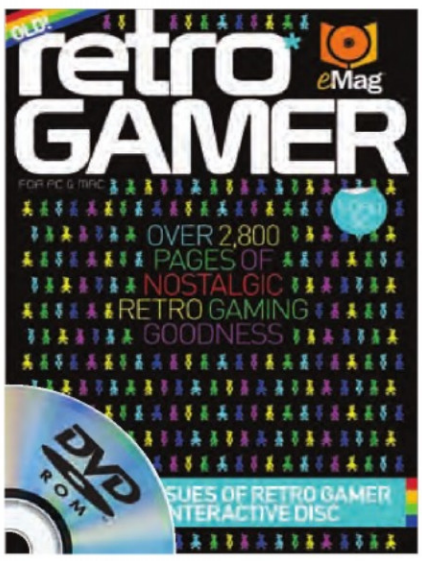
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RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Phantasy Star Portable 2

All's well in Gurhal? Let us plant a Seed of doubt...



DETAILS

Publisher
Sega
Developer
Alfa System
Price
£29.99
Players
1-4
Genre
RPG
Supports
Infrastructure Wi-Fi
Multiplayer
Age Rating
12
Website
http://phantasystar.sega.jp/psp2/

PSP For some original *Phantasy Star Online* fans, the series lost its way with *Phantasy Star Universe*, where late patches and a lack of support saw many stray to greener pastures. But though developer Alfa System is yet to rekindle those glory days of killing, looting and adventuring in an expansive science-fiction universe, this second *Phantasy Star Portable* title has moved light years in the right direction.

Set three years after the events of *Phantasy Star Online*, *Phantasy Star Portable 2*'s Gurhal system is suffering a resource crisis, prompting the four races to explore a new type of planetary exploration called 'sub-space sailing'. Unfortunately, this also opens the way for the galactic threat that is Seed to return, resulting in a frantic effort to seal it away again. Not that you need to know any of this before embarking on this typically robust and detailed RPG, but players having some background experience prior to delving into *Phantasy Star Portable 2* will reap the gameplay rewards that much quicker.



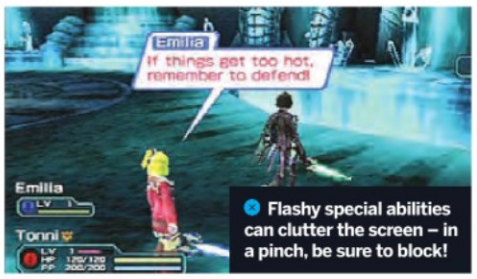
Time your attacks for longer chains and bigger damage.

Character creation is as accessible as RPGs come

Character creation is as accessible as RPGs come, with four races and four classes to choose from that offer strengths and weaknesses with ranged, melee and 'tech' weapons, with a suggested class depending on your level of experience. Once you've defined your character's face, clothing and build, you're thrust straight into your first mission. Combat revolves around pressing ◎ to a rhythm for perfect combos and maximum damage, as well as special attacks with the △ button. For most missions you'll have support from other characters, too, which, being a very Japanese-style RPG, makes *PSP 2* feel like a real-time *Final Fantasy* game. A definite plus if you like elfin-faced girls and effeminate guys fighting in ridiculous get-ups, and can get past the dodgy camera angles and clipping issues that sometimes hamper your game.

While picking up story and single-player missions from the Clad 6 starship colony hub, bashing bosses, discovering secrets and levelling up has only limited appeal for all but the most ardent fans of this style of RPG, that's not *PSP 2*'s main strength. Link-up and PlayStation Network multiplayer allows you to adventure with three other players co-operatively, tackle missions available only to co-op, search for rare artefacts and trade items via the main mission hub. It's a very *Monster Hunter*-style feature that turns what is only a shade more than a generic RPG into something a bit more fulfilling.

Ben Biggs



Flashy special abilities can clutter the screen – in a pinch, be sure to block!



First *Jaws*, now *PSP 2*: why do sharks get such a bad rap?



Gloating is second nature to the pals you take along for story missions.



Healers are useful. At the very least, they'll save you money.



Most missions are replayable at higher levels for bigger rewards.

VERDICT

It's text heavy, combat can be clumsy and the premise for this RPG is hardly original, but JRPG fans are going to love *Phantasy Star Portable 2* regardless.

68%

Or you could try  **Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness** Issue 161
An absolute must-have for RPG fans' game collections. **92%**

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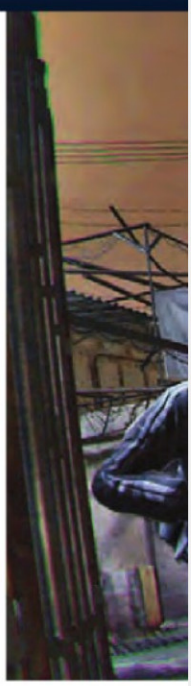


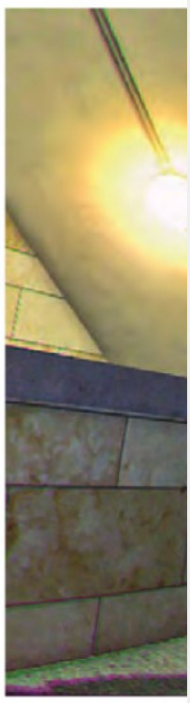
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"IO should fix what's broken and make a truly stunning sequel" 71%

The cast of characters differ in the Fragile Alliance based modes but more customisation would have been nice.



DETAILS

Publisher
Square Enix
Developer
IO Interactive
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£49.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Third-person shooter
Supports
1080p, Downloadable content, Sixaxis, Dolby Digital 5.1, DualShock 3

Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days

Every dog has its day but not everyone can appreciate it

There's no denying that the original *Kane & Lynch*'s major strength lay within its multiplayer component. Fragile Alliance was not only a breath of fresh air compared to what other developers were hurling out at the time, but it genuinely asked you to co-operate with those around you. Better still, *Dead Men* was also more than happy to throw out the option for you to turn on said team-mates, so at the end of the day, it was you who was better off. The dynamic worked exceptionally well but had one glaring flaw: no one played it. With servers often dead and the majority of matches consisting of just sitting in a lobby, it wasn't long before IO's new IP and its one redeeming feature were lost to the past. Fast-forward the clock three years, and the Danish developer has returned with revenge on its mind.

Thankfully, the mode many of us wanted to see succeed makes a comeback, only this time it's brought some friends to try to bolster the experience. Like before, the main premise is to join up with a group of players and try to break your way into a facility – be it a bank or similar – and get as much cash as possible. With the cops on your tail, anyone who falls to their doom joins that side, giving you an instant enemy and more forces to deal with as you try to escape. It works as well as it did back in 2007 with the refinements and extra polishing only improving the foundations. The extras only add to this, the highlight coming in the form of Undercover Cop mode. Following the same template, one member is chosen as a secret police associate and has to try to take out their so-called friends as quietly and tactfully as possible. It's incredibly tense and finding a pattern where you're executing numerous opponents without anyone realising carries with it some serious satisfaction. Cops & Robbers, while not as tantalising, still manages to hold its own.

Using the mentioned groundwork, it throws out any sense of betrayal to focus solely on mutual aid. With four minutes to try to steal the money, the fuzz are once again bearing down on you and your sole aim is to protect those within your flock that have managed to grab the most cash. It can be a frantic race, especially when you have to sacrifice yourself for the greater good: all points at the end of the round are shared.

> It all adds up to what is again a unique offering over the PSN but still doesn't live up to all it could be

It all adds up to what again is a unique offering over the PlayStation Network but doesn't live up to all it could be, mainly due to the core mechanics still not being strong

online reviews

ーミナル

それはどのようによかったか。



IO's level design is clever but each map does always threaten to roll into one. We expect some DLC at some point.



Undercover Cop is *Dog Day*'s highlight. If the man at the back was the chosen one, he could easily use this situation to take out both men completely unawares.

enough. *Dog Days* gets away with it in single-player mainly due to the competitive edge coming from the computer. Throw some skilled players into the mix and *Kane & Lynch 2* struggles to keep every match as tight and succinct as we would like. It's still definitely playable and those with the patience will learn workarounds, but with a tighter set of controls and a better shooting system, this could be absolutely incredible. For now, we have to settle with solid.

Simon Miller

VERDICT

Once again IO shows that few developers boast the intelligence and originality it does, but *Kane & Lynch*'s core mechanics just aren't strong enough to make this the must-play it's so close to being.

★★★☆☆

THE COLOUR OF MONEY

Why you'll want to earn the green

MANY PEOPLE QUESTION why those playing *Kane & Lynch 2* don't just kill their team-mates and get away with the money – such thoughts are foolhardy. Not only is it near impossible to escape on your own, but cash is key to upgrading your player between rounds. As in the real world, notes are used to buy new weapons. Like any levelling-up system, the better you do, the more currency you'll have, with the best guns waiting for the most successful competitors. To reach such heights, creating alliances with some of your friends is vital. You may share the winnings at the end, but at least you're actually likely to walk away with a bonus. Considering how *Dog Days* develops as you continue to play, this will become your one and only lifeline.

PSN Roundup

MADDEN NFL 11

EA Tiburon keeps the wheels turning

Publisher EA **Developer** EA Tiburon **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1-6 **Genre** Sports

We don't envy EA Tiburon. *Madden*'s online modes have come so far the last few years it was always going to be a struggle for the dveloper to try to innovate within the field once again. Alas, *Madden NFL 11*'s updates aren't as impressive or gargantuan as what has come before but considering that the innovative steps from the past still remain along with a few newer ones, what's here is still rather very good. The major addition in *Madden NFL 11* is Online Team Play that allows you and two of your friends to team up to take on another group of three players. Throwing out attribute boosts for those





that play well, it's both fun and rewarding for the obsessed *Madden* player: the more you get involved, the better your long-term game will be. With the option to now scout opponents ahead of taking them on, EA's latest effort can at times feel oddly real. You'll still need to be a super fan to get the most out of it, but this Madden edition continues to satisfy where it counts. **SM**

VERDICT

There aren't a great deal of new features in *Madden 11*, but what's here is of a very high standard. ★★★★★

TOM CLANCY'S H.A.W.X. 2

As hard as we try, we just want to mention Top Gun…

Publisher Ubisoft **Developer** Ubisoft Romania **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1-8 **Genre** Flight Sim

If you're like us, the fact *H.A.W.X.* even has a sequel is a little surprising. Somehow selling over a million copies, Ubisoft's accessible flight sim struck a chord with gamers. Although the follow-up doesn't shift things too dramatically, online is actually rather decent. Offering both co-op and competitive modes, with both managing to hold their own, in particular the former. Giving you scope to fly with up to three friends, taking on missions and commanding the skies with real-life wingmen is oddly compelling, especially when you start working in unison.





Fighting it out against others lacks a certain appeal, however. Dogfighting can become an endless chase that can get slightly monotonous. To be fair, though, this isn't *H.A.W.X. 2*'s fault as it's more indicative of the genre itself, but these problems do rear their head. If Ubisoft's series has you intrigued, though, it does justify taking it online. **SM**

VERDICT

Taking to the skies with three friends is absorbing at times, but does get boring after a while. ★★★★★



Legends & Killers gives you the chance to play as plenty of popular characters from the game.

Red Dead Redemption: Legends & Killers Pack DLC

A legendary download?

DETAILS

Publisher
Rockstar Games
Developer
In-House
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£7.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Shoot-'em-up

Rockstar may well know how to make incredibly polished single-player experiences but it still has a bit of tinkering to do before its multiplayer experiences are up to the same impossibly high standards. *Legends & Killers* marks its first foray into paid multiplayer gaming on Sony's PS3 and for the most part it's a relative success.

From a monetary point of view, ignoring the fact that the Xbox 360 version is inexplicably cheaper – why do developers insist on converting MS Points to cash? – you are actually getting a fair amount of great stuff for your hard-earned cash. There are nine new maps, a large selection of character skins, a smattering of new Trophies to enjoy and the ridiculously overpowered tomahawk that is quickly becoming the weapon of choice in whatever games feature it.

To say the tomahawk is overpowered is something of an understatement. It's a ridiculously powerful game changer that's deadly in the hands of a novice, but near game breaking in the hands of a skilled individual. While its range is far shorter than *Red Dead Redemption*'s guns – unless you aim high – a hit from it will usually result in an instant kill, meaning that you can charge in, take several hits from a gun and still walk around regardless of where your tomahawk actually lands.

As a result it has become the weapon of choice on practically every stage you can use it and it really comes into its own on Grab the Bag, where quick kills are needed in order to bag that precious gold. The upside is that it's great fun to play with; the downside is it takes variety out of the game and makes it feel more than a little unbalanced.

> A very fun piece of DLC that continues to put the wild into the Old West

It's not just the introduction of the tomahawk that makes *Legends & Killers* feel uneven, as some of the included maps could also do with some more tweaking to ensure that they're more palatable for gamers wanting more substance when playing online. The levels here will feel immediately recognisable to anyone who has completed the main game, as they have all been imported from it. While this means that they feel instantly familiar, some of them just aren't suited to multiplayer gaming, either being far too crowded or sparse.

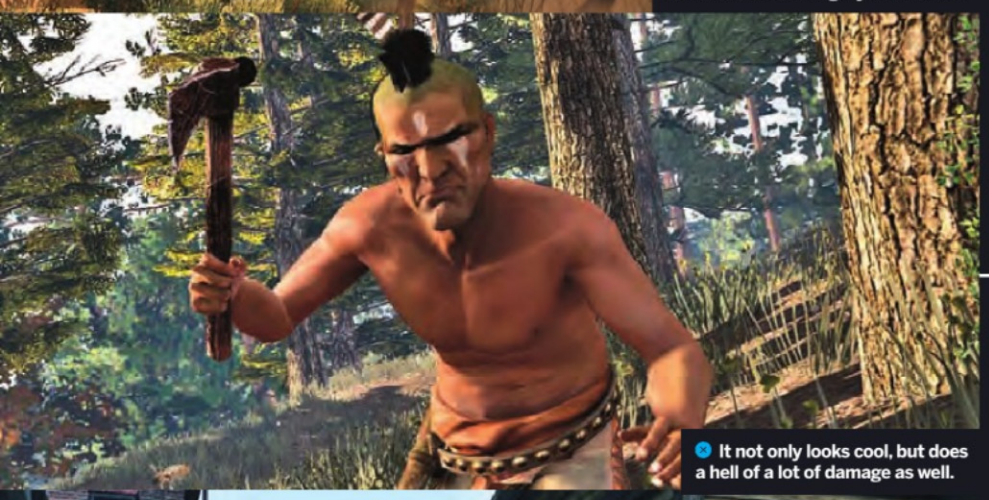
Fortunately, the vast majority of the included levels are very good, with Blackwater and Fort Mercer being particular standouts. Fort Mercer leads itself very well to competitive play thanks to its clever structure and the huge amount of hiding opportunities

Store Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。



Guns may have bullets but they're no match for the mighty tomahawk.



It not only looks cool, but does a hell of a lot of damage as well.



that the large structure offers. Blackwater is also good fun, being set in a large town that offers plenty of great sniping opportunities and covers.

Despite price disparities, some bland maps and the unbalanced tomahawk, *Legends & Killers* still represents a solid addition to Rockstar's superb Western epic. With a little more tweaking and balancing it would have been an unmissable opportunity. As it stands it's just a very fun piece of DLC that continues to put the wild into the Old West.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

Rockstar is still having teething problems getting to grips with online gaming, but there's no doubting its ambitions. *Legends & Killers* certainly has its flaws, but it remains a solid piece of DLC. It just could have been so much better.

★★★☆☆



HAVING A SKINFUL

Hey. Don't I recognise you?

JUDGING BY THE amount of people using them, the new skins are one of the best features of *Legends & Killers*. They're all unlockable from the start and they're just really satisfying to use. It's far more fun to play as Annie Stokes and Pig Josh than as a generic miner and it should come as no surprise that many online matches are now dominated by the popular characters. As long as we can bury a tomahawk in the back of Pig Josh's skull we'll be more than happy.

Store Roundup

BLADE KITTEN GAME

This kitten has claws

Publisher Atari **Developer** Chrome Studios **Price** £9.99 **Players** 1 **Genre** Adventure



NOW THIS IS a pleasant surprise. *Blade Kitten* is a wonderfully adept adventure in the style of *Castlevania* that features a charming main lead and plenty of variety. It's full of hidden secrets and also boasts some excellent visuals and a really atmospheric soundtrack. The only thing that lets it down is that the controls feel incredibly spongy at times, leaving you often mistiming jumps or getting hit through no fault of your own. There's still plenty to enjoy, though, so check it out if you're looking for something a little different. **72%**

SCOTT PILGRIM VS THE WORLD: THE VIDEOGAME GAME

8-bit fun on the PS3

Publisher Ubisoft **Developer** Ubisoft Montreal **Price** £7.99 **Players** 1-4 **Genre** Beat-'em-up



WITH ITS 8-BIT-STYLED visuals and hilarious character, Ubisoft Montreal's new beat-'em-up screams charm.

There's a clever levelling-up system – you keep your character's abilities after they die – a huge range of special moves to learn and truly challenging boss battles. In fact, the only things that let *Scott Pilgrim* down are that levels go on for far too long and the lack of online play is absolutely unforgivable. **77%**

SHANK GAME

The bloodiest PSN game ever

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Developer** Klei Entertainment **Price** £9.99 **Players** 1-2 **Genre** Beat-'em-up



SHANK EASILY JUSTIFIES its 18 certificate. Thugs are dismembered, decapitated, have grenades thrown down their throats and get eviscerated by katanas – all in the name of fun.

Shank features brilliantly structured levels, clever and inventive boss battles and an all-important multiplayer mode that's a hell of a lot of fun to play through. Visuals are well stylised, while the moody music and *Kill Bill*-style plot adds immeasurably to the on-screen action. Highly recommended. **86%**

GUNDEMONIUM COLLECTION GAME

Don't shoot 'til you see their big eyes

Publisher Sony **Developer** Rockin' Android **Price** £9.99 or £3.99 each **Players** 1 **Genre** Shoot-'em-up



PSN ISN'T KNOWN for its homebrew projects, so this trilogy of homebrew shooters is well worth a look. First released on the PC, the *Gundemonium Collection* features manga-style visuals, clever gameplay mechanics and over-the-top bosses. The bullet-hell nature of the games won't be for everyone, but their accessibility and bargain price tags mean they're worth checking out if you've ever had an interest in the genre. **80%**

UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES: SIDEKICK SKINS PACK DLC

Naughty Dog finally drops the ball

Publisher Sony **Developer** Naughty Dog **Price** £2.39 **Players** 1-3 **Genre** Adventure

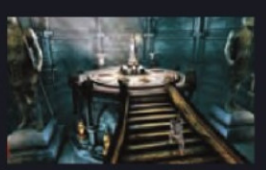


AFTER DELIVERING SOME genuinely exciting multiplayer maps and gameplay modes it would appear that the *Uncharted* train is finally running out of steam. This new piece of DLC is a reasonable price, but all you're getting is eight new skins. It obviously adds a little variety when playing online but surely this is the sort of content that you should just be able to unlock while playing? Put your cash towards the maps instead. ★☆☆☆☆

DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS – THE GOLEMS OF AMGARRAK DLC

Dragon Age DLC keeps on coming

Publisher Electronic Arts **Developer** BioWare **Price** £3.99 **Players** 1 **Genre** RPG



BIOWARE CERTAINLY KNOWS how to add longevity to its games. *The Golems Of Amgarrak* may not be as narratively compelling as past releases, but there's plenty to do in it. Be warned, though, it's not for the faint-hearted as the titular golems put up a fair old fight and will test the most hardened of parties. There's a sense of BioWare treading water until its sequel is released next year, but this remains a decent addition to the *Dragon Age* story. ★★★☆☆



Cage puts in one of his best performances for years as Terrence McDonagh.



Bad Lieutenant: Port Of Call: New Orleans

Being bad has never been so good

DETAILS

Price
£24.99
Sound
True HD 5.1 Surround
Director
Werner Herzog
Starring
Nicolas Cage, Val Kilmer, Eva Mendes

If you're expecting to see Harvey Keitel flash his bits in HD then prepare for disappointment, this is not *that Bad Lieutenant*. While Werner Herzog's new film shares the same title, it is not a reboot or a remake, but instead its own entity. It's also a cracking piece of cinema thanks to an excellent performance from Cage as the titular antihero.

After rescuing a doomed prisoner in a moment of rare generosity, Terrence McDonagh (Cage) is promoted to lieutenant, but develops a serious back injury as a result of the rescue. Six months later the now Vicodin-addicted McDonagh is assigned a huge murder case involving illegal immigrants and must hold it together while getting involved with underground criminals, huge gambling debts and an unhealthy drug addiction.

As the title suggests, McDonagh is one bad lieutenant and will do whatever it takes in order to break the case and fuel his drug addiction. Forcing a boyfriend to watch while McDonagh copulates with his partner, ripping the oxygen tube from a defenceless old-aged pensioner and bribing fellow police officers is all in a day's work for the twisted lieutenant, who's descending deeper and deeper into madness despite the love of a good prostitute (Mendes).

In anyone else's hands *Bad Lieutenant* could have been just another generic cop thriller, but Herzog and Cage make it something else. Filled with delicious streaks of black humour and some unforgettable sequences it's Herzog's most accessible film to date, with Cage also delivering the sort of mesmerising performance that made him so popular in the likes of *Wild At Heart* and, more recently, in *Kick-Ass!*. Wisely steering clear of Keitel's performance in Abel Ferrara's 1992 film he nevertheless remains just as watchable, and it would be genuinely disturbing to watch if it wasn't filled with so many genuinely funny moments.

> Werner Herzog's new film is not a reboot or a remake, but its own entity

Considering the quality of the actual film, it really is a shame that the rest of this Blu-ray isn't up to the same high standards. The transfer and audio are perfectly acceptable, with New Orleans in particular benefitting from the high-quality transfer, but the disc's included extras are incredibly disappointing. Considering the history the film has – Ferrara has savagely criticised having his film remade, while Werner is adamant that he's never seen the original film and that he constantly tried to change the name of the film – there is very little insight into the movie production itself.



McDonagh will do anything to feed his and his girlfriend's drug habits.

There's a selection of rather bland interviews with the likes of Werner, Cage and Mendes, which are full of backslapping praise, while the included making-of is surprisingly dull, giving no indication of how difficult Herzog can allegedly be to work with.

Of course, for many the included features won't matter, but considering the overall quality of the film, it's a shame that the actual Blu-ray isn't up to the same high standard.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

The disc is filled with forgettable extras, but the film itself makes this a must-own. A genuinely decent thriller is married to one of Cage's best performances in years.

RATING: ★★★★★

Plus all the latest hardware reviews

Blu-ray Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

Mars Attacks!



PRICE: £17.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Tim Burton
STARRING: Jack Nicholson, Pierce Brosnan, Natalie Portman

TIME HAS NOT been kind to Tim Burton's sci-fi flick. While the CGI aliens have never looked better, the cast is largely wasted, with only a genuinely amusing turn from Nicholson in a dual role providing genuine laughs. Sadly, while the Blu-ray itself offers a solid transfer it's completely devoid of extras, making it something of a missed opportunity. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

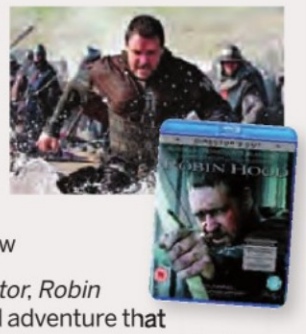
Lost In Space



PRICE: £17.99
SOUND: DTS-HD 5.1
DIRECTOR: Stephen Hopkins
STARRING: William Hurt, Heather Graham, Gary Oldman

DESPITE A STRONG cast and some nice nods to the original TV series, this disappointing reboot never really gets going, despite a wonderfully hammy turn from Oldman as Doctor Smith. It fares well on Blu-ray thanks to a razor-sharp transfer and an interesting set of features. It's just a shame many of the DVD extras have been cut. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

Robin Hood: Extended Director's Cut



PRICE: £24.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1 Surround
DIRECTOR: Ridley Scott
STARRING: Russell Crowe, Cate Blanchett, Max von Sydow

WHILE NOT A patch on *Gladiator*, *Robin Hood* remains a rousingly good adventure that features an always-dependable Crowe and some truly impressive battle scenes. Add in a great transfer, two alternate cuts of the film and a raft of extras and *Robin Hood* becomes a perfectly acceptable Blu-ray release. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

The Deep



PRICE: £24.99
SOUND: Dolby TrueHD 5.1 Surround
DIRECTORS: Jim O'Hanlon
STARRING: James Nesbitt, Minnie Driver, Goran Visnjic

THE DEEP CLEARLY wants to be a clever scientific thriller, but this BBC venture fails on most levels. It starts well, with James Nesbitt's wife being swallowed by an unknown object while exploring the depths, but it soon descends into farce. The dialogue is flaky, while the effects appear to have been created with the leftovers of *Doctor Who*'s budget. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

A Nightmare On Elm Street



PRICE: £17.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 7.1 Surround
DIRECTOR: Wes Craven
STARRING: Robert Englund, John Saxon

IT MAY HAVE spawned numerous duff sequels and a painful reboot, but Wes Craven's original *Nightmare On Elm Street* remains one of cinema's best horrors. This Blu-ray is rather tasty as well thanks to a decent transfer, exceedingly creepy audio and a great set of extras that range from entertaining commentaries to in-depth features. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

Hannibal Lecter Trilogy



PRICE: £44.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Various
STARRING: Anthony Hopkins, Jodie Foster, Julianne Moore

WISELY IGNORING HANNIBAL *Rising*, this boxset includes *Silence Of The Lambs*, *Hannibal* and *Red Dragon*. There are plenty **of decent** extras on offer and all the transfers are excellent, but this only really represents value for money for Hannibal nuts. Everyone else should simply buy *The Silence Of The Lambs* and save themselves some cash. **DJ**
RATING: ★★★★★

HD Reviews

TVs and media systems that'll make your home entertainment come to life



Sony BDPS570B

Price: £176
Dimensions: 43 x 20.6 x 3.6cm

Sony continues to improve its Blu-ray players and this one is very impressive for the price. There's built-in Wi-Fi, DNLA functioning that allows for home media streaming and very impressive upscaling. Best of all it even features built-in 3D functionality for when you finally get around to affording a 3DTV. ★★★★★



Samsung BD-C6900

Price: £249
Dimensions: 43.3 x 20.5 x 4.3cm

More and more Blu-ray players are featuring 3D compatibility and this new offering from Samsung is no different. In addition it also features built-in Wi-Fi, thunderous 7.1 sound and an AllShare mode that allows it to sync wirelessly to your PC or Samsung phone. A solid Blu-ray player at an affordable price. ★★★★★



Samsung BD-C5300

Price: £108
Dimensions: 43 x 20.5 x 4.3cm

If you're short on cash you'll find this budget player from Samsung will suit you perfectly. It may not feature built-in Wi-Fi or 3D capabilities, but it does perform solid upscaling and is Profile 2.0 compatible. It also comes with six films including *Brüno*, *Up* and *Toy Story*, making it something of a bargain. ★★★★★

Competition





WIN A PS3!



This Is War breaks out

DESCRIBED BY SOME critics as the real-life *Call Of Duty*, over 60 hours of footage has been edited down to 90 minutes of explosive action in *This Is War*, released nationwide on 4 October.

Placing you in the heart of the battle like never before, *This Is War* tells the story of First Lieutenant Mike Scotti, who, in July 2002, volunteered to extend his service with the American Marine Corps. Six months later he was propelled to the frontline of one of the most notorious and complex military campaigns of our time: Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marching through the deserts of a crumbling regime, Scotti records the soldiers' progress on his personal MiniDV camera and presents a relentless and uncensored view of life on the frontlines.

To experience *This Is War* on your very own PlayStation 3, courtesy of Momentum Pictures, simply answer the following question:

This Is War has been compared to Call Of Duty, but what is the name of the upcoming COD title?

a) Black Ops
b) Modern Warfare
c) World At War

Terms And Conditions

To submit your answer, simply email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject line 'This Is War competition' plus your name and address. The closing date for entries is 28 October 2010. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only, and any left through the comments section of this website will be automatically disqualified.

This competition is open to residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Imagine Publishing has the right to substitute the prize for a similar item of equal or higher value. Employees of Imagine Publishing (including freelancers), their relatives, or any agents are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Full terms and conditions are available upon request.

From time to time, Imagine Publishing or its agents may send you related material or special offers. If you do not want to receive this, please state it clearly on your competition entry.

PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GUILTY PLEASURES

Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

PS3 • Activision • 2008 • Play 168 • 60%



IT'S A BIT of a surprising realisation that only a couple of years ago we were still seeing PC conversions to console being handled poorly. Nowadays not only are you less likely to see things handled poorly – you're less likely to see them being PC conversions in the first place.

But, back in 2008 this was the case. *Enemy Territory: Quake Wars* was a very good game on PC; exciting, well made and with a fantastic online multiplayer. It was eventually converted to consoles and released almost nine months later to... poor reviews, including our very own "not awful, but not great" 60%. It was just a bit too *sloppy*.



But even under that lack of sheen there was still something recognisable – still the skeleton of the 'Game That Was'. It's a struggle to get beyond the game's issues, but you can garner some enjoyment from *Quake Wars* if you give it enough slack. The brilliant game mechanics are still present: the fantastic levels; balanced objectives; emphasis on teamwork; vehicular hilarity. It's just hidden a bit behind a smear of turd.

Normally we would call for you to unleash your forgotten copies of *Quake Wars* and give them a bash – give them a *chance*. But unfortunately there's no real point any more: this is a game that lives or dies by its online community. While on PC it's still thriving, on PS3 it's long dead. If only we had been a bit more forgiving.

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	**192**	**87%**
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	**177**	**61%**
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Alpha Protocol	**193**	**83%**
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	**173**	**70%**
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	**153**	**67%**
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	**188**	**65%**
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	**161**	**58%**
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Backbreaker	**193**	**70%**
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	**183**	**85%**
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	**168**	**78%**
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	**190**	**93%**



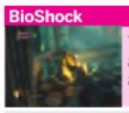
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.

Bayonetta*	**187**	**93%**



The most over-the-top, inventive, consistently thrilling, overtly sexual, guiltily enjoyable Japanese action game we've played in years.

Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	**161**	**61%**
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	**172**	**93%**



This FPS-adventure hybrid has been admirably translated to the PS3. The most atmospheric game of our time.

BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	**163**	**43%**
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	**190**	**85%**
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Blitz: The League II	**172**	**67%**
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	**185**	**80%**
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	**185**	**79%**
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	**168**	**82%**
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	**151**	**77%**
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	**160**	**88%**
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	**178**	**87%**
Civilization Revolution	**168**	**90%**



The popular PC series makes its way to the PS3, so you can while away your hours playing this instead of doing important things.

Clash Of The Titans	**193**	**65%**
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	**158**	**91%**



Quite simply the second-best rally game on the PS3. Still, if simulation is what you're after then go for this over *Sega Rally*.

Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%

game	issue	score
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	**178**	**65%**
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	**165**	**78%**
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Cross Edge	**182**	**59%**
Damnation	181	38%
Dante's Inferno	**189**	**80%**
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Void	**188**	**81%**
Darksiders	188	83%
Dead Space	**172**	**87%**
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Demon's Souls	**193**	**92%**



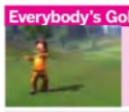
As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.

Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	**178**	**29%**
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	**175**	**81%**
DJ Hero	**186**	**91%**



It's just like playing *Guitar Hero* for the first time all over again, although *DJ Hero* is slightly more expensive.

Dragon Age: Origins	**186**	**82%**
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	**168**	**61%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	**176**	**43%**
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	**164**	**30%**
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Eat Lead	**178**	**38%**
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	**168**	**60%**
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	**158**	**88%**
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	**165**	**91%**



The most recent *Tiger Woods* game may have been rubbish, but don't worry because *Everybody's Golf* is bloody brilliant.

Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	**185**	**83%**
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	**186**	**51%**
Fallout 3	**173**	**97%**



Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.

Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	**172**	**74%**
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	**176**	**87%**
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	**171**	**87%**
FIFA 10	**184**	**90%**



The best football game made marginally better. The crown held by *PES* seems like so long ago now.

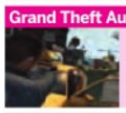
FIFA Street 3	**163**	**66%**
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Round 3	**151**	**87%**
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	**190**	**85%**
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	**151**	**72%**
Fracture	171	72%
Fuel	**180**	**49%**
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	**183**	**59%**
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%

game	issue	score
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	**157**	**83%**
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	**183**	**22%**
God Of War Collection*	**188**	**93%**



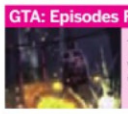
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.

God Of War III	**190**	**88%**
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	**166**	**98%**



If you haven't already bought it, then stop reading this box, put your shoes on and go out and get it! The best game ever? Probably.

Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	**191**	**94%**



Two fine expansions bundled together and without the need for *GTA IV* to play them. What more could you want.

Guitar Hero III	**160**	**90%**



Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!

Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	**168**	**63%**
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	**179**	**88%**
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero World Tour	**173**	**95%**



World Tour just about manages to trump rival *Rock Band* with its entertaining music-creation tools, and quality peripherals.

Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	**155**	**32%**
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	**157**	**71%**
Heavy Rain	**189**	**94%**



It will certainly split opinion, but we absolutely love it. A valuable addition to the wonderful world of gaming.

Heroes Over Europe	**184**	**48%**
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	**183**	**72%**
inFamous	180	81%
International Cricket 2010	**194**	**61%**
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	**193**	**50%**
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	**187**	**64%**
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	**190**	**87%**
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	**196**	**71%**
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	**176**	**93%**



Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.

Kung Fu Rider	**196**	**65%**
Lair	158	52%
Last Rebellion	**191**	**42%**
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	**173**	**62%**
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	**194**	**79%**
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	**187**	**71%**
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	**160**	**76%**
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%

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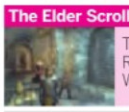
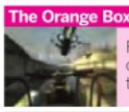
This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Mafia II PS3	81%	Valkyria Chronicles 2 PSP	87%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days PS3	71%	Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep PSP	88%
Madden NFL 11 PS3	84%	Alien Breed: Impact PSN	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2 PS3	69%	Earthworm Jim HD PSN	89%
Sports Champions PS3	83%	Tales Of Monkey Island PSN	91%
Start The Party! PS3	72%	Planet Minigolf PSN	58%
Kung Fu Rider PS3	65%		

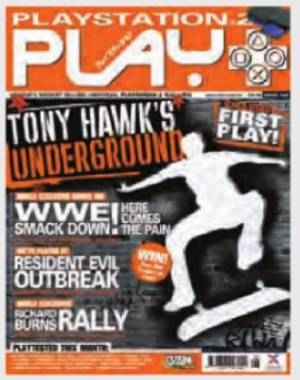
game	issue	score
LittleBigPlanet	**172**	**94%**
 Create, share and play. Sackboy heads up Media Molecule's highly customisable and adorable platformer.		
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	**163**	**69%**
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	**175**	**52%**
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	**157**	**82%**
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	**184**	**82%**
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Mafia II	**196**	**81%**
MAG	189	68%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	**151**	**64%**
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	**161**	**85%**
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	**167**	**92%**
 Not the final *Metal Gear Solid* game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	**186**	**94%**
 A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	**173**	**84%**
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	**173**	**71%**
ModNation Racers	**192**	**90%**
 The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love *LBP* you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	**170**	**78%**
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	**172**	**65%**
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotorStorm	**151**	**92%**
 With the addition of an online multiplayer, *MotorStorm* gets the score it deserves, and currently leads the lines for the next gen.		
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	**172**	**93%**
 With its balls strapped firmly to the wall, *Pacific Rift* amplifies the drama of the original to create the PS3's best racing title.		
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	**164**	**58%**
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	**157**	**38%**
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	**153**	**33%**
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	**172**	**71%**
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA Live 08	**158**	**59%**
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	**151**	**68%**
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed ProStreet	**161**	**86%**
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	**173**	**75%**
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	**151**	**80%**
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	**186**	**70%**
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	**184**	**85%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%

game	issue	score
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	**184**	**82%**
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Overlord: Raising Hell	**167**	**65%**
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	**183**	**69%**
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	**172**	**80%**
PES 2010	185	72%
PixelJunk Racers	**160**	**74%**
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Prince Of Persia	**174**	**83%**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	**191**	**40%**
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	**171**	**80%**
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	**175**	**57%**
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rainbow Six Vegas	**155**	**88%**
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	**186**	**82%**
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	**193**	**92%**
 Relocates the familiar *GTA* formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Faction: Guerrilla	**180**	**80%**
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	**190**	**86%**
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	**173**	**90%**
 With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, *Resistance 2* is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	**151**	**75%**
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	**169**	**94%**
 *Rock Band* could be the best rhythm-action game ever. Especially if you're playing with a group of friends. Even better after a few beers.		
Rock Band 2	**179**	**96%**
 With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rogue Warrior	**188**	**09%**
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	**172**	**79%**
Saw	186	52%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	**177**	**85%**
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	**193**	**67%**
Sega Rally	**158**	**92%**
 Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for *Colin McRae*. Not much in it, really.		
Sega Superstars Tennis	165	68%
Shaun White Snowboarding	**173**	**72%**
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	**174**	**64%**
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	**159**	**80%**
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	**195**	**80%**
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	**175**	**82%**
Skate 3	192	86%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	**190**	**78%**
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	**175**	**48%**

game	issue	score
Soul Calibur IV	**169**	**94%**
 Even the gimmicky appearance of Darth Vader can't spoil *Soul Calibur IV*. Another wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Spider-Man 3	**155**	**33%**
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	**153**	**79%**
Split/Second: Velocity	**192**	**90%**
 Just beating *Blur* to the chequered flag, *Split/Second* is a wonderfully intense racing game in the *Burnout* mould.		
Sports Champions	**196**	**83%**
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	**171**	**65%**
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	**178**	**51%**
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	**176**	**95%**
 The best beat-'em-up on the PS3, probably the best beat-'em-up ever, and maybe even the best game ever. Our poor little thumbs.		
Stuntman: Ignition	**157**	**82%**
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	**190**	**55%**
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	**191**	**90%**
 The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Tekken 6	**184**	**94%**
 There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, *nothing*, stops *Tekken 6* from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
The Beatles: Rock Band	**184**	**96%**
 It's a gorgeous game that'll make Beatles fans feel like they're being swaddled in a veil of pure joy. A breathtaking product.		
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	**163**	**80%**
The Darkness	**154**	**91%**
 This unique FPS combines the best bits of *Mafia* and war films along with some highly innovative gameplay elements.		
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	**152**	**91%**
 This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, *Oblivion* is an awesome game.		
The Godfather	**151**	**37%**
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	**162**	**32%**
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	**182**	**82%**
The Orange Box	**161**	**93%**
 Five brilliant games for the price of one, what on Earth could be better than that? Nothing, that's what. *Absolutely nothing.*		
The Saboteur	**187**	**67%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	**158**	**73%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	**181**	**69%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Time Crisis 4	**166**	**69%**
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	**171**	**71%**
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	**177**	**75%**
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	**173**	**83%**
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	**160**	**72%**

**denotes import review*

THIS MONTH IN PLAY



Issue 108, October 2003

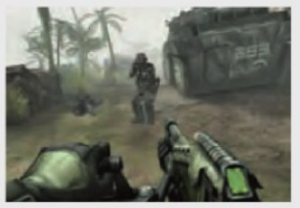
SEEING AS IT was October time – it happens once a year – we were talking in-depth about *SmackDown!: Here Comes The Pain*, which some hold up as the series' high point.

The news section shows us that some things never, ever



change. Like *GTA* being blamed for a shooting. This time it was the turn of a 14 and a 16 year old to blame their murdering ways on the game.

Our huge *Killzone* preview went the way of so many other things our former brothers had



a hand in. Namely: it got a bit excited about the guns, and claimed Guerrilla understood how an anti-aircraft gun could "be beautiful". Hmm.

Reviews-wise came the revelation that *Time Crisis* didn't used to be as pump as it



is today, with the third game in the series getting a huge 90%. Though we did say it had a "meathead" gaming style.

The world famous **Play** letters pages caught our eye, as the star letter posed the question: where are all the black videogame characters (who aren't bad guys or hideous stereotypes)? Seven years later, we still haven't found the answer.

YOU MAY HAVE MISSED



Spider-Man: Pro Skater

STEP BACK TO a more innocent time and you will see little bits like this popping up in games. Back in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*, players completing the game 100 per cent with a created character would unlock everybody's favourite web-slinging superhero as a character.

This penchant for putting unexpected, or sometimes downright strange secret



characters in the *Hawk's* series continued for many years, with the likes of Wolverine, Darth Maul, Iron Maiden mascot Eddie, Gene Simmons and even Benjamin Franklin making appearances. They didn't all suit the game and they weren't all funny, but they were fun secrets to unlock.

But as the series progressed, these characters became fewer in number and far less interesting. Musicians, a couple of *Guitar*



Hero characters and not much else popped up to surprise us when we started to get bored of the games. To be honest, though, the magic was long gone. The emphasis on your own creations seemed to steal some magic away.

What did *Ride* give us? Kat Von D, of *Miami/ LA Ink* fame. A celebrity tattooist. Where was the comedy? The tie-in with other Activision properties? Where was Soap MacTavish? One of the numerous Spideys from *Shattered Dimensions*? Anyone? We sincerely hope this gets fixed for *Tony Hawk: Shred*, otherwise it's another missed opportunity.

game	issue	score
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	**168**	**71%**
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	**195**	**82%**
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	**156**	**34%**
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity Universe	**194**	**61%**
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	**163**	**46%**
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	**180**	**90%**
Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	**161**	**87%**
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	**185**	**96%**
Among Thieves has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.		
Unreal Tournament III	**162**	**88%**
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	**173**	**82%**
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	**165**	**74%**
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	**180**	**80%**
Virtua Tennis 3	**150**	**91%**
Pick-up-and-play gameplay strikes another blow, proving that the PS3 is currently at its best when it keeps it simple.		
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhawk	**157**	**84%**
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	**190**	**16%**
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	**178**	**72%**
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	**190**	**55%**
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	**151**	**56%**
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	**178**	**80%**
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2009	**173**	**74%**
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2010	185	77%
X-Blades	**178**	**54%**
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	**191**	**80%**
Yakuza 4*	193	75%

PS STORE LISTING

game	issue	score
1942: Joint Strike	**170**	**74%**
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	**193**	**91%**
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	**196**	**80%**
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	**193**	**68%**
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Bishi Bashi Special!	**175**	**61%**
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Blast Factor	**152**	**72%**
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	**188**	**61%**
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	**185**	**82%**
Braid	**188**	**93%**
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for *Braid*. Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	**178**	**85%**
Call Of Duty Classic	**188**	**90%**
It doesn't have *MW2*'s polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		
Calling All Cars	**155**	**81%**
Catan	195	85%
Comet Crash	**186**	**84%**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	**176**	**55%**
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3: Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	**175**	**44%**
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	**175**	**31%**
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	**174**	**82%**
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	**170**	**79%**
Critter Crunch	**188**	**91%**
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	**184**	**48%**
Dark Mist	164	53%
DeathSpank	**195**	**83%**
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	**186**	**50%**
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	**190**	**66%**
Driver	**171**	**90%**
With the most cinematic car chases ever seen in a game, *Driver* made a huge impact in 1998. Despite ropey graphics, it's still a playable title.		
Droplitz	**184**	**91%**
Droplitz is a superb puzzler that blends *Rez*-style layers of music, pipes and dials to create one of the most satisfying puzzlers in years.		
Earthworm Jim HD	**196**	**89%**
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	**170**	**45%**
Everybody's Golf 2	62	83%
Fade To Black	**09**	**44%**
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	**168**	**65%**
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	**193**	**90%**
This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	**181**	**96%**
Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	**190**	**90%**
A truly engaging RPG – if you've never experienced the game before then make sure this is the next thing you download.		
Final Fantasy IX	**195**	**90%**
Never gets the love it deserves, but this PSN release gives you the chance to experience Square Enix's refreshing RPG all over again.		
Flock!	**179**	**70%**
flOw	**151**	**90%**
Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. *flOw* is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	**190**	**35%**
G-Police	27	84%
Geon	**175**	**71%**
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	**150**	**75%**
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	**191**	**75%**
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gunstar Heroes	**181**	**85%**
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	**15**	**81%**
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	**187**	**75%**
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	**178**	**64%**
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	**188**	**70%**
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	**171**	**80%**
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	**185**	**70%**
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	**194**	**96%**
Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	**18**	**19%**
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kick-Ass The Game	**194**	**60%**
Kula World	172	71%
Landit Bandit	**195**	**66%**
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	**151**	**79%**
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	**159**	**80%**
Lumines Supernova	**178**	**90%**
Probably the best puzzle game on the PSN, which is saying something because there's loads of competition.		
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	**179**	**65%**
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	**182**	**90%**
This game has an astonishing amount to offer if you're prepared to plunge into its murky depths.		
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
MediEvil	**173**	**45%**
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	**192**	**82%**
Metal Gear Solid	**187**	**93%**
While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	**195**	**94%**
The HD remake of arguably the best game in the *Monkey Island* series is a more than welcome addition to the PSN.		
Motorhead	**173**	**60%**
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Noby Noby Boy	**177**	**85%**
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	**183**	**60%**
N20	37	70%
OutRun Online Arcade	**180**	**80%**
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	**189**	**94%**
So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.		
PixelJunk Eden	**169**	**67%**
PixelJunk Monsters	**163**	**94%**
The second game in the *PixelJunk* series is great fun and brilliantly addictive. Buy it and play it constantly for hours on end!		
PixelJunk Shooter	**187**	**93%**
Q-Games delivers excellence on the PSN once again with its *PixelJunk* series, this time in the form of a classic shoot-'em-up.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	**196**	**58%**
Polar Panic	190	65%

game	issue	score
Populous: The Beginning	**46**	**70%**
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	**194**	**70%**
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	**58**	**53%**
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	**29**	**77%**
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	**01**	**76%**
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	**162**	**86%**
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	**165**	**63%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	**194**	**90%**



Clever, funny and taxing in all the right ways, we're very happy that the Freelance Police are on PlayStation 3.

Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	**194**	**92%**



This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.

Savage Moon	**175**	**87%**
Section 8	193	78%
Shatter	**183**	**91%**
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	**170**	**62%**
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	**178**	**55%**
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Spin Jam	**174**	**32%**
Syphon Filter	**48**	**93%**



Gabe Logan's gritty PSone adventure has shadowed all that came after. As always, the original really is best.

Snakeball	176	92%
Star Trek: D-A-C	**189**	**57%**
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Skater 2	**178**	**40%**
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	**151**	**83%**
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	**155**	**74%**
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	**191**	**75%**
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	**196**	**91%**



Telltale Games' excellent modern addition to the *Monkey Island* franchise finally sees the light of day on PSN. Go pick it up.

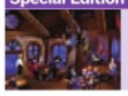
Tank Battles	**186**	**68%**
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	**161**	**87%**
The Last Guy	**171**	**91%**



Snake meets *Pac-Man* meets GoogleMaps. *The Last Guy* is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.

The Punisher: No Mercy	**182**	**49%**

game	issue	score
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	**195**	**92%**



LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.

Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	**174**	**80%**
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	**54**	**34%**
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	**162**	**31%**
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	**159**	**50%**
Trine	184	85%
Uno	**189**	**85%**
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	**192**	**87%**
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	**171**	**80%**
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipEout	**01**	**89%**
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	**181**	**70%**
Worms	**179**	**91%**



There's a reason *Worms* is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.

Zuma	182	78%

PSP minis LISTING

Alien Havoc	186	68%
Bloons	**186**	**65%**
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	**186**	**45%**
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	**186**	**57%**
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero of Sparta	**186**	**57%**
Kahoots	186	88%
Pinball Fantasies	**186**	**90%**



Pinball Fantasies was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.

Puzzle Scape	**186**	**75%**
Tetris	**186**	**93%**



How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.

Vempire	186	67%

PSP LISTING



game	issue	score
300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	**147**	**72%**
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	**152**	**82%**
Ape Academy	134	44%
Ape Academy 2	**145**	**52%**
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	**190**	**45%**
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	**142**	**68%**
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	**145**	**45%**
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	**184**	**53%**
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	**165**	**69%**
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	**149**	**69%**
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	**134**	**94%**



Despite being more of a 'best of' than a completely new game, *Legends* is the best racing game on the PSP.

Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	**147**	**80%**
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	**143**	**60%**
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	**137**	**65%**
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	**180**	**32%**
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	**153**	**69%**
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	**167**	**87%**
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	**191**	**76%**
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	**161**	**92%**



An absolute must-have for RPG fans, and one of the best titles available on the PSP. A simply brilliant game.

Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	**190**	**87%**
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	**154**	**68%**
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	**148**	**85%**
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	**147**	**74%**
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	**191**	**73%**
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	**195**	**88%**
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	**138**	**65%**

The In Tray

Things we've been sent this month

Brasso Gadgetcare

If you're tired of your glossy gadgets looking like they've just been felt up by Greggs' counter staff then you might want to try a spot of this new smudge budger from Brasso. Gadgetcare is a new cleaning product that helps keep your phone, iPad and, more importantly, Sony products looking their best. Here comes the science: it's a gel that incorporates silicone and anti-static properties to make your trusty technology look better for longer. Apply a few drops using the mircofibre cloth and shine up your stuff. **Price: £4.99 with cloth**



Genius Trio Racer F1 Racing Wheel

With quite a few racing games arriving this month it might be an idea to get into gear with a racing wheel. This one claims to be ergonomic quite a lot on the box, so we're going to go out on a limb and say it's ergonomic. As well as being well rounded it has a mounting clamp, eight-directional pad and 11 programmable buttons for your various rubber-burning endeavours. As well as a hand-lever for gear shifting there are two pedals to keep your feet flailing. **Price: £29.99 @ www.geniusnet.co.uk**



**denotes import review*

DNF

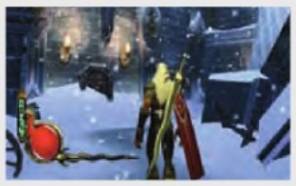
DID NOT FINISH

Legacy Of Kain: The Dark Prophecy

PS2 • 2004



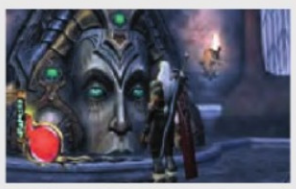
ANYONE PAYING ATTENTION to **Play** will know that we have a long-standing love for the *Legacy Of Kain/ Soul Reaver* series. They were a good bunch, with wonderful characters and an atmospheric world created around them.



SO IT WAS that we were disappointed when the series petered out. After the cliffhanger ending of *Defiance* it just seemed to stop. No announcement of a cancellation and no word of potential sequels – *Legacy Of Kain* just... *stopped.*



BUT IT TURNS out this wasn't the full story, and it was unearthed back at the end of 2008 that actually Crystal Dynamics had been working on a new *Kain* title, this one with the name *The Dark Prophecy.*



THE GAME DIDN'T get beyond a few months of development time and was never officially announced, but a few mock-ups and examples of the game's art exist on the internet if you want to stare and wonder what could have been.



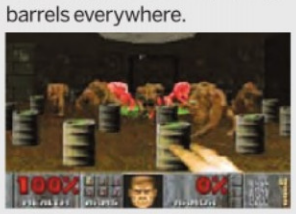
FOR NOW, THOUGH, we're still left in a world without *Kain* sequels, and this wounds us greatly. We want more from the main character who was, for all intents and purposes, a bit of a bastard.

GAMING CLICHÉS & VIDEOGAME LOGIC



Explosive barrels

IF THERE'S ONE thing that the Gaming Clichés & Videogame Logic section, as we've now christened it, exists for it is these. Exploding barrels are the trope to end all tropes; seemingly existing in just about every genre of game produced in every corner of the world. From JRPGs to Polish tile-based strategy games, it's safe to say there are exploding barrels everywhere.



Of course it was *Doom* that popularised the idea of highly (*highly*) volatile materials being left around for anyone to bump into. Problem there being, of course, bumping into them might cause a massive explosion. Many other FPS titles followed suit and the cliché leaked out into other genres, with clusters of the volatile buggers popping up all over the shop.



Explosive barrels straddle the gap between clichés and logic quite easily. Not only are they ubiquitous, but the overriding thought of any enemy near them is "I must run to that barrel for cover. There I will be safe". This appears to be the logic pattern followed by around 78 per cent of baddies encountered in games.

Even though explosive barrels are no longer just barrels – you have boxes, pipes, crates and anything else you could think of – they do tend to be red to help avoid any unforeseen de-limbings of players. Even so, enemy troops still insist on huddling around them, possibly for warmth. Maybe because they're thick.

game	issue	score
F1 2009	187	66%
F1 Grand Prix	**134**	**81%**
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	**136**	**43%**
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA World Cup 2010	**193**	**65%**
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	**164**	**63%**
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	**164**	**79%**
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld	**139**	**82%**
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	**187**	**60%**
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	**136**	**36%**
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	**157**	**42%**
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	**144**	**79%**
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	**165**	**84%**
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	**184**	**85%**
Gripshift	136	81%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	**185**	**95%**



Bar some combat control issues, *GTA: Chinatown Wars* has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.

GTA: Liberty City Stories	**135**	**95%**



Successfully taking the *GTA* formula and putting it on one UMD of pure goodness, this is one of the PSP's best games.

GTA: Vice City Stories	**147**	**96%**



Improving on its predecessor, the only way *Vice City Stories* could be topped is if *San Andreas* comes to the PSP.

Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	**136**	**69%**
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	**186**	**73%**
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	**181**	**60%**
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	**154**	**70%**
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	**187**	**71%**
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	**141**	**70%**
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	**137**	**60%**
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	**196**	**88%**
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	**186**	**90%**



Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.

LocoRoco	**143**	**94%**



We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.

LocoRoco 2	**173**	**82%**
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lumines II	**137**	**74%**
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	**155**	**38%**
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	**147**	**72%**
Medievil Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	**145**	**66%**
Metal Slug Anthology	**150**	**91%**



We're not too clued up on retro games, but we do know our *Metal Slug* and the *Anthology* is a great compilation.

game	issue	score
Metal Gear Ac!d 2	**138**	**92%**



More card-based espionage starring everyone's favourite mullet-head, with funky new cel-shaded graphics.

Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	**193**	**92%**



A fantastic entry in the *Metal Gear Solid* series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.

Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	**150**	**91%**



A proper *Metal Gear Solid* game on a portable machine. It was never likely to disappoint, and it didn't. A great title.

Miami Vice	**144**	**82%**
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	**134**	**57%**
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	**140**	**81%**
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	**181**	**77%**
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	**184**	**72%**
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	**136**	**68%**
Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	**169**	**46%**
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	**175**	**57%**
Need For Speed Most Wanted	136	73%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	**139**	**93%**



The arcade classic comes to PSP and is just as good as it's ever been. The perfect game to play on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	**163**	**86%**
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patchwork Heroes	**192**	**85%**
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	**185**	**86%**
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	**144**	**49%**
PoPoLoCRoIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	**145**	**88%**
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	**138**	**69%**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	**181**	**80%**
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	**173**	**54%**
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	**159**	**76%**
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	**153**	**66%**
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	**156**	**78%**
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Rengoku 2	**144**	**72%**
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	**145**	**78%**
Ridge Racer	**132**	**91%**



Arguably the best launch game on the PSP, *Ridge Racer* still stands up as one of the finest racing games for the system.

Rock Band Unplugged	**181**	**92%**



Unplugged comes highly recommended. It's superb – there are few better rhythm-action games on the handheld.

Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	**169**	**79%**
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	**158**	**90%**



Very nearly as good as its PlayStation 3 counterpart. Which is a good thing because that's the best rally game money can buy.

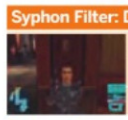
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	**160**	**87%**
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Smash Court Tennis	**154**	**58%**

game	issue	score
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	**190**	**71%**
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	**140**	**69%**
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	**162**	**35%**
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	**183**	**92%**



New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.

Spider-Man 3	**162**	**32%**
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	**139**	**71%**
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	**178**	**78%**
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	**137**	**74%**
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	**148**	**69%**
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	**138**	**70%**
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	**142**	**54%**
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	**140**	**90%**



In the absence of a 'real' *MGS* game, it's left to Gabe Logan to carry the stealthy torch, and he does a fine job.

Tekken 6	**187**	**90%**



Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play, *Tekken 6* is the best game of the series on PSP.

Tekken: Dark Resurrection	**143**	**92%**



Tekken: Dark Resurrection is instantly playable and provides the PSP's first great brawler.

Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	**146**	**51%**
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	**153**	**64%**
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	**136**	**66%**
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	**137**	**71%**
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	**152**	**70%**
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	**156**	**81%**
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	**134**	**54%**
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	**189**	**46%**
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	**158**	**49%**
Valkyria Chronicles 2	**196**	**87%**
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	**140**	**82%**
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	**161**	**70%**
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	**159**	**86%**
WipEout Pure	**138**	**91%**



Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld *WipEout* game could be, *Pure* is an essential PSP purchase.

World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	**141**	**67%**
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	**157**	**80%**
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	**147**	**80%**
World Rally Championship	134	67%

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Let the war commence on PlayStation 3



VERDICT

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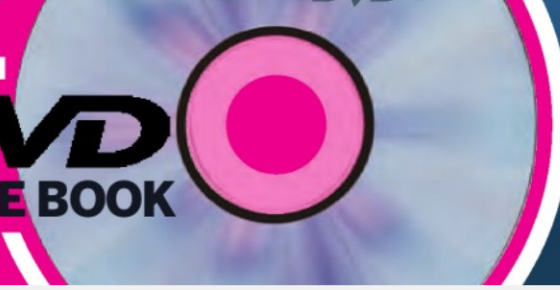
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EA SPORTS MMA

EA prepares for a showdown with THQ

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Free game demo!

TRUE OR FALSE CRIME



IF YOU'RE GOING to be patrolling the streets of Hong Kong in True Crime, then you need to know the difference between True Crime and False Crime, otherwise you'll end up arresting (or possibly brutally killing) False Criminals, and that won't do.

Fortunately, we've assembled this exclusive True Crime: Hong Kong demo for you to practise your detective skills. All you have to do is read the crime reports and determine which are True Crimes (that actually did happen) and which are False Crimes (that we actually made up)...



A JULY 2004 SOUTH YORKSHIRE, UK

David Walker, 28, from Dinnington was sentenced to five years in prison for possession of an illegal firearm after a shotgun he had stuffed down his trousers accidentally discharged, almost completely destroying his testicles.

B JULY 2007 NORTHUMBERLAND, UK

A man was arrested and charged with criminal damage after rugby tackling a 6ft-tall glass-fibre hot dog at the Magic Of The 80s concert at Alnwick Castle, breaking its arm off in the process.

C JULY 2008 KØGE, DENMARK

Six students were arrested after attempting to conduct what they called a 'chariot race' on Denmark's busy E47 motorway. Police spotted two cars, each towing a shopping trolley with a single occupant, on the motorway sliproad and stopped them before they could merge with the speeding traffic.

D MARCH 2005 SHANGHAI, CHINA

A 41-year-old player of PC MMO *The Legend Of Mir*, Qiu Chengwei, was arrested for stabbing his friend Zhu Caoyan to death after Caoyan sold an in-game Dragon Sabre Chengwei had lent to him.

E MAY 1998 DOOLIN, IRELAND

A 32-year-old British tourist, Richard Flack was arrested for indecent exposure after wandering naked into the ballroom of the Doolin Hotel at approximately 12:30am with a busy wedding reception in full flow and defecating onto a chair. Flack was a guest at the hotel, and claimed he had been sleepwalking.

F DECEMBER 2003 BRIGHTON, UK

Timothy Francis, 28, was arrested for speeding at the bottom of The Drove, Brighton having caused two traffic accidents, minor injuries to six pedestrians and a total of £4,000 in criminal damage. He was on roller blades.

G FEBRUARY 2003 SITGES, SPAIN

A 25-year-old Barcelona man, Miguel Torres, dressed in a comical chef's outfit was arrested during Mardi Gras festivities in the coastal town of Sitges after seriously injuring another man, who was dressed in a chicken suit, with a meat cleaver. Apparently, it had all started as a drunken joke.

H JUNE 2002 KASSEL, GERMANY

Jens Münster, an achondroplastic dwarf just 4ft 2in tall, was charged with criminal damage totalling over 2,000 euros after he toppled an entire aisle of supermarket shelves. He had climbed the shelf to reach a particular brand of bread, but slipped, fell and brought the whole lot down with him.

I DECEMBER 2009 BENXI, CHINA

Police arrested 23-year-old Sing He after he entered a restaurant and threatened to detonate explosive devices strapped to his waist. A bomb squad was called to the scene and quickly determined that the 'explosive devices' were in fact all perfectly harmless sausages.

J AUGUST 2009 BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Sam Charles Spuchess, 63, was charged with serious assault after squeezing a police officer's testicles. The officer was turning Spuchess away from the Story Bridge, which was temporarily closed during the RiverFire fireworks festival, and Spuchess squeezed his testicles in frustration.

ANSWERS: **A** True Crime, **B** True Crime, **C** False Crime, **D** True Crime, **E** False Crime, **F** False Crime, **G** False Crime, **H** False Crime, **I** True Crime, **J** True Crime

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interview

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Arkham City

A Knight to remember

DEFINITIVE VERDICT

ENSLAVED ODYSSEY TO THE WEST

We go west to reveal why Monkey is magic

review

DEAD RISING 2

Capcom's zombie horde plague the PlayStation 3

exclusive

BIOSHOCK: INFINITE

The sky's the limit in Ken Levine's brave new world

network

LITTLE BIG PLANET 2

Why you might not have to buy another game ever again

hands-on

GRAN TURISMO 5

Sony's sublime title is racing to a rapturous release